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Library

A BOOK
OF
GOLDEN
DEEDS

BY

Charlotte M. Yonge

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For the purpose of this edition some of the earlier and legendary stories have been omitted.

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INTRODUCTION

A GENTLE, shy child, physically timid, but with great force of character, and an invincible determination to do what she thought was right: this is what one of Charlotte Yonge's playfellows remembers of her in earliest youth. As she was then, so she remained to the end of a singularly beautiful and useful life. So tender-hearted that she could not suffer an injury to the smallest insect; so strong of soul that she was never known to shirk a duty.

Even in the nursery Charlotte Yonge began to exercise the extraordinary gifts of imagination that made her in later years one of the most successful writers of her time. Her little companions, although perhaps years older than herself, eagerly looked forward to their walks with her; for to them she was an entrancing and inexhaustible story-book. "Even when five years old," says the writer I have cited above, "she would tell us histories of her children, as she called them, her dolls, as well as children of her imagination, who all seemed as real to her and to us as if they had been living beings; and I can now [seventy years later] clearly remember the delight of listening to her histories of them after we were in bed, for she and I and one sister shared the same room; also our distress when Mason (the nurse) came with a peremptory order of 'No more talking.'"

Charlotte Mary Yonge was born at Otterbourne, near Winchester, on the 11th of August, 1823. Her father had been an officer in the Army, and served under Lord Seaton, then Colonel Colborne, in Spain;

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but on his marriage with Lord Seaton's step-sister he had retired on half-pay and settled down on a small estate belonging to his wife's mother. Charlotte Yonge's upbringing was what in these days would be regarded as extremely strict; for her parents, although lacking nothing in love for the eager, excitable child, thought it their duty to avoid anything in the nature of "spoiling." "There was nothing," she tells us in her reminiscences, "to make me think myself important; I was repressed when I was troublesome, made to be obedient or suffer for it, and was allowed few mere indulgences in eating and drinking, and no holidays." And yet she adds, with a touch of characteristic loyalty, no one ever had a happier or more joyous childhood.

The joys, if not the happiness, must have been largely derived from her own power of make-believe, for her home life seems to have been somewhat lonely; she had only at rare intervals the companionship of her many cousins. But she could always summon her imagination to her aid, weave stories about her dolls, the chief of whom was Miss Eliza, or, out of doors, watch over a make-believe family of ten boys and eleven girls, who lived in an arbour in the garden, and whose further adventures are unfortunately lost to the world. Or she would walk alone on a gravel-path round a field adjoining the house, dreaming and castle-building, which, she tells us somewhat pathetically, had the advantage of teaching her how to be alone.

Charlotte Yonge seems always to have been precocious, even allowing for the fact that for the first five years of her life she was an only child. At four years of age she could read *Robinson Crusoe;* at five she began *Sandford and Merton* and Rollin's *Ancient History;* and her lessons at that time included reading, spelling, poetry, geography, arithmetic, grammar, history, and catechism. At eleven she was helping her younger brother with Latin, which she studied with her father, the lessons taking place at six in the morning. In this, as in other matters, Mr. Yonge seems to have been a severe taskmaster, for when the young scholar failed in diligence and accuracy, which she says were utterly alien to her, he "thundered" at her "so that nobody could bear to hear it." She was often reduced to tears, but she adds, with charming filial loyalty, her father's approbation was so delightful that it was a delicious stimulus, and "in spite of all breezes over my innate slovenliness, it would have broken our hearts to leave off working together."

In the succeeding years she studied under the same tuition Greek, Euclid, and algebra, while she learned French from a nobleman who had been driven to England in the early days of the Revolution. For her French master she wrote as exercises a series of stories, founded possibly on the adventures of the ten boys and eleven girls who years before had lived in the arbour in the garden, and these were printed under the title *Le Château de Melville, ou Récréations du Cabinet d'Etude*, and sold at a bazaar in aid of the village school. She was then fifteen.

From this time forward her life was one of constant literary activity. She wrote little stories and lessons for the village school, and before she was twenty was a regular contributor to the *Magazine for the Young*, a periodical intended for children of the working classes. In 1851 she became the first editor of the *Monthly Packet*, a magazine for children of the middle class, and her connection with this periodical, a great favourite in its day, lasted for nearly fifty years. *Abbeychurch*, her first book (if we except the *Château de Melville*), was published in 1844. Her relatives, we are told, did not think highly of the story; but Dean Church prophesied success because, he said, "every character, however simple, is perfectly distinct and living." In these few words he explained the popularity that came to Charlotte Yonge with the publication of the *Heir of Redclyffe* a few years later. The quality of reality that held her little playmates spellbound when listening to the story of Miss Eliza was conspicuous in all her work.

Her special appeal was to children, or at least to young people; but many of her works found a very large circle of adult readers. She wrote of many subjects, for her education had given her a wider field than most women writers of her generation; but whatever her subject, the tendency of each and all of her books was always religious and educational.

It is characteristic of Charlotte Yonge that the proceeds of the scores of books that flowed from her pen during over fifty years of ceaseless literary activity were largely devoted to religious and educational objects.

A Book of Golden Deeds, first published in 1864, has been one of the most deservedly popular of Charlotte Yonge's works. It is full of a noble enthusiasm for the great virtues, courage and self-sacrifice, that inspired the principal actors in these stirring narratives.

Miss Yonge died in 1901, at her native village of Otterbourne. There, except for a few brief absences, she had spent the whole of her long life—truly a life of golden deeds, though not perhaps so stirring or dramatic as those of which she loved to tell us in these pages.

HERBERT STRANG.

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A BOOK OF GOLDEN DEEDS

WHAT IS A GOLDEN DEED?

We all of us enjoy a story of battle and adventure. Some of us delight in the anxiety and excitement with which we watch the various strange predicaments, hair-breadth escapes, and ingenious contrivances that are presented to us; and the mere imaginary dread of the dangers thus depicted, stirs our feelings and makes us feel eager and full of suspense.

This taste, though it is the first step above the dulness that cannot be interested in anything beyond its own immediate world, nor care for what it neither sees, touches, tastes, nor puts to any present use, is still the lowest form that such a liking can take. It may be no better than a love of reading about murders in the newspaper, just for the sake of a sort of startled sensation; and it is a taste that becomes unwholesome when it absolutely delights in dwelling on horrors and cruelties for their own sake; or upon shifty, cunning, dishonest stratagems and devices. To learn to take interest in what is evil is always mischievous.

But there is an element in many of such scenes of woe and violence that may well account for our interest in them. It is that which makes the eye gleam and the heart throb, and bears us through the details of suffering, bloodshed, and even barbarity—feeling our spirits moved and elevated by contemplating the courage and endurance that they have called forth. Nay, such is the charm of brilliant valour, that we often are tempted to forget the injustice of the cause that may have called forth the actions that delight us. And this enthusiasm is often united with the utmost tenderness of heart, the very appreciation of suffering only quickening the sense of the heroism that risked the utmost, till the young and ardent learn absolutely to look upon danger as an occasion for evincing the highest qualities.

> "O Life, without thy chequer'd scene
> Of right and wrong, of weal and woe,
> Success and failure, could a ground
> For magnanimity be found?"

The true cause of such enjoyment is perhaps an inherent consciousness that there is nothing so noble as forgetfulness of self. Therefore it is that we are struck by hearing of the exposure of life and limb to the utmost peril, in oblivion, or recklessness of personal safety, in comparison with a higher object.

That object is sometimes unworthy. In the lowest form of courage it is only avoidance of disgrace; but even fear of shame is better than mere love of bodily ease, and from that lowest motive the scale rises to the most noble and precious actions of which human nature is capable—the truly golden and priceless deeds that are the jewels of history, the salt of life.

And it is a chain of Golden Deeds that we seek to lay before our readers; but, ere entering upon them, perhaps we had better clearly understand what it is that to our mind constitutes a Golden Deed.

It is not mere hardihood. There was plenty of hardihood in Pizarro when he led his men through terrible hardships to attack the empire of Peru, but he was actuated by mere greediness for gain, and all the perils he so resolutely endured could not make his courage admirable. It was nothing but insensibility to danger, when set against the wealth and power that he coveted, and to which he sacrificed thousands of helpless Peruvians. Daring for the sake of plunder has been found in every robber, every pirate, and too often in all the lower grade of warriors, from the savage plunderer of a besieged town up to the reckless monarch making war to feed his own ambition.

There is a courage that breaks out in bravado, the exuberance of high spirits, delighting in defying peril for its own sake, not indeed producing deeds which deserve to be called golden, but which, from their heedless grace, their desperation, and absence of all base motives—except perhaps vanity—have an undeniable charm about them, even when we doubt the right of exposing a life in mere gaiety of heart.

Such was the gallantry of the Spanish knight who, while Fernando and Isabel lay before the Moorish city of Granada, galloped out of the camp, in full view of besiegers and besieged, and fastened to the gate of the city with his dagger a copy of the Ave Maria. It was a wildly brave action, and yet not without service in showing the dauntless spirit of the Christian army. But the same can hardly be said of the daring shown by the Emperor Maximilian when he displayed himself to the citizens of Ulm upon the topmost pinnacle of their cathedral spire: or of Alonso de Ojeda, who figured in like manner upon the tower of the Spanish cathedral. The same daring afterwards carried him in the track of Columbus, and there he stained his name with the usual blots of rapacity and cruelty. These deeds, if not tinsel, were little better than gold leaf.

A Golden Deed must be something more than mere display of fearlessness. Grave and resolute fulfilment of duty is required to give it the true weight. Such duty kept the sentinel at his post at the gate of Pompeii, even when the stifling dust of ashes came thicker and thicker from the volcano, and the liquid mud streamed down, and the people fled and struggled on, and still the sentry stood at his post, unflinching, till death had stiffened his limbs; and his bones, in their helmet and breastplate, with the hand still raised to keep the suffocating dust from mouth and nose, have remained even till our own times to show how a Roman soldier did his duty. In like manner the last of the old Spanish infantry originally formed by the Great Captain, Gonzalo de Cordova, were all cut off, standing fast to a man, at the battle of Rocroy, in 1643, not one man breaking his rank. The whole regiment was found lying in regular order upon the field of battle, and their colonel, the old Count de Fuentes, at their head, expiring in a chair, in which he had been carried, because he was too infirm to walk, to this his twentieth battle. The conqueror, the high-spirited young Duke d'Enghien, afterwards prince of Condé, exclaimed, "Were I not a victor, I should have wished thus to die!" and preserved the chair among the relics of the bravest of his own fellow-countrymen.

Such obedience at all costs and all risks is, however, the very essence of a soldier's life. An army could not exist without it, a ship could not sail without it, and millions upon millions of those whose "bones are dust and good swords are rust" have shown such resolution. It is the solid material, but it has hardly the exceptional brightness, of a Golden Deed.

And yet perhaps it is one of the most remarkable characteristics of a Golden Deed that the doer of it is certain to feel it merely a duty: "I have done that which it was my duty to do" is the natural answer of those capable of such actions. They have been constrained to them by duty, or by pity; have never even deemed it possible to act otherwise, and did not once think of themselves in the matter at all.

For the true metal of a Golden Deed is self-devotion. Selfishness is the dross and alloy that gives the unsound ring to many an act that has been called glorious. And, on the other hand, it is not only the valour, which meets a thousand enemies upon the battle-field, or scales the walls in a forlorn hope, that is of true gold. It may be, but often it is mere greed of fame, fear of shame, or lust of plunder. No, it is the spirit that gives itself for others—the temper that for the sake of religion, of country, of duty, of kindred, nay, of pity even to a stranger, will dare all things, risk all things, endure all things, meet death in one moment, or wear life away in slow, persevering tendance and suffering.

Such a spirit was shown by Leæna, the Athenian woman at whose house the overthrow of the tyranny of the Pisistratids was concerted, and who, when seized and put to the torture that she might disclose the secrets of the conspirators, fearing that the weakness of her frame might overpower her resolution, actually bit off her tongue, that she might be unable to betray the trust placed in her. The Athenians commemorated her truly golden silence by raising in her honour the statue of a lioness without a tongue, in allusion to her name, which signifies a lioness.

Another woman, in 1450, when Sir Gilles of Brittany was savagely imprisoned and starved almost to death by his brother, Duke François, sustained him for several days by bringing wheat in her veil, and dropping it through the grated window, and when poison had been used to hasten his death, she brought a priest to the grating to enable him to make his peace with Heaven. Tender pity made these women venture all things; and surely their doings were full of the gold of love.

So again two Swiss lads, whose father was dangerously ill, found that they could by no means procure the needful medicine, except at a price far beyond their means, and heard that an English traveller had offered a large price for a couple of eaglets. The only eyrie was on a crag supposed to be so inaccessible, that no one ventured to attempt it, till these boys, in their intense anxiety for their father, dared the fearful danger, scaled the precipice, captured the birds, and safely conveyed them to the traveller. Truly this was a deed of gold.

Such was the action of the Russian servant whose master's carriage was pursued by wolves, and who sprang out among the beasts, sacrificing his own life willingly to slake their fury for a few minutes in order that the horses might be untouched, and convey his master to a place of safety. But his act of self-devotion has been so beautifully expanded in the story of "Eric's Grave," in "Tales of Christian Heroism," that we can only hint at it, as at that of "the Helmsman of Lake Erie," who, with the steamer on fire around him, held fast by the wheel in the very jaws of the flame, so as to guide the vessel into harbour, and save the many lives within her, at the cost of his own fearful agony, while slowly scorched by the flames.

Memorable, too, was the compassion that kept Dr. Thompson upon the battle-field of the Alma, all alone throughout the night, striving to alleviate the sufferings and attend to the wants, not of our own wounded, but of the enemy, some of whom, if they were not sorely belied, had been known to requite a friendly act of assistance with a pistol-shot. Thus to remain in the darkness, on a battle-field in an enemy's country, among the enemy themselves, all for pity and mercy's sake, was one of the noblest acts that history can show. Yet, it was paralleled in the time of the Indian Mutiny, when every English man and woman was flying from the rage of the Sepoys at Benares, and Dr. Hay alone remained, because he would not desert the patients in the hospital, whose life depended on his care—many of them of those very native corps who were advancing to massacre him. This was the Roman sentry's firmness, more voluntary and more glorious. Nor may we pass by her, our living type of Golden Deeds, who first showed how woman's ministrations of mercy may be carried on, not only within the city, but on the borders of the camp itself—" the lady with the lamp," whose health and strength were freely devoted to the holy work of softening the after sufferings that render war so hideous ; whose very step and shadow carried gladness and healing to the sick soldier, and who has opened a path of like shining light to many another woman who only needed to be shown the way. Fitly, indeed, may the name of Florence Nightingale be given a place at the opening of our roll of Golden Deeds.

What have been here brought together are chiefly cases of self-devotion that stand out remarkably, either from their hopelessness, their courage, or their patience, varying with the character of their age ; but with that one essential distinction in all, that the dross of self was cast away.

Among these we cannot forbear mentioning the poor American soldier, who, grievously wounded, had just been laid in the middle bed, by far the most comfortable of the three tiers of berths in the ship's cabin in which the wounded were to be conveyed to New York. Still thrilling with the suffering of being carried from the field, and lifted to his place, he saw a comrade in even worse plight brought in, and thinking of the pain it must cost his fellow-soldier to be raised to the bed above him, he surprised his kind lady nurses (daily scatterers of Golden Deeds) by saying, " Put me up there, I reckon I'll bear hoisting better than he will."

And, within living memory, there was an American Railway collision that befell a train on the way to Elmira with prisoners. The engineer, whose name was William Ingram, might have leapt off and saved himself before the shock; but he remained in order to reverse the engine, though with certain death staring him in the face. He was buried in the wreck of the meeting train, and when found, his back was against the boiler—he was jammed in, unable to move, and actually being burnt to death; but even in that extremity of anguish he called out to those who came round to help him to keep away, as he expected the boiler would burst. They disregarded the generous cry, and used every effort to extricate him, but could not succeed until after his sufferings had ended in death.

While men and women still exist who will thus suffer and thus die, losing themselves in the thought of others, surely the many forms of woe and misery with which this earth is spread do but give occasions of working out some of the highest and best qualities of which mankind are capable. And oh, young readers, if your hearts burn within you as you read of these various forms of the truest and deepest glory, and you long for time and place to act in the like devoted way, bethink yourselves that the alloy of such actions is to be constantly worked away in daily life; and that if ever it be your lot to do a Golden Deed, it will probably be in unconsciousness that you are doing anything extraordinary, and that the whole impulse will consist in the having absolutely forgotten self.

THE BATTLE OF THE BLACKWATER

991

In the evil days of King Ethelred the Unready, when the teaching of good King Alfred was fast fading away from the minds of his descendants, and self-indulgence was ruining the bold and hardy habits of the English, the fleet was allowed to fall into decay, and Danish ships again ventured to appear on the English coasts.

The first Northmen who had ravaged England came eager for blood and plunder, and hating the sight of a Christian church as an insult to their gods, Thor and Odin; but the lapse of a hundred years had in some degree changed the temper of the North; and though almost every young man thought it due to his fame to have sailed forth as a sea-rover, yet the attacks of these marauders might be bought off, and, provided they had treasure to show for their voyage, they were willing to spare the lives and lands of the people of the coasts they visited.

King Ethelred and his cowardly, selfish Court were well satisfied with this expedient, and the tax called

Danegeld was laid upon the people, in order to raise a fund for buying off the enemy. But there were still in England men of bolder and truer hearts, who held that bribery was false policy, merely inviting the enemy to come again and again, and that the only wise course would be in driving them back by English valour, and keeping the fleet in a condition to repel the "Long Serpent" ships before the foe could set foot upon the coast.

Among those who held this opinion was Brythnoth, Earl of Essex. He was of partly Danish descent himself, but had become a thorough Englishman, and had long and faithfully served the King and his father. He was a friend to the clergy, a founder of churches and convents, and his manor-house of Hadleigh was a home of hospitality and charity. It would probably be a sort of huge farm-yard, full of great barn-like buildings and sheds, all one storey high; some of them serving for storehouses, and others for living-rooms and places of entertainment for his numerous servants and retainers, and for the guests of all degrees who gathered round him as the chief dispenser of justice in his East-Saxon earldom. When he heard the advice given and accepted that the Danes should be bribed, instead of being fought with, he made up his mind that he, at least, would try to raise up a nobler spirit, and, at the sacrifice of his own life, would show the effect of making a manful stand against them.

He made his will, and placed it in the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury; and then, retiring to Hadleigh, he provided horses and arms, and caused all the young men in his earldom to be trained in warlike exercises, according to the good old English law, that every man should be provided with weapons, and know the use of them.

The Danes sailed forth, in the year 991, with ninety-three vessels, the terrible "Long Serpents," carved with snakes' heads at the prow, and the stern finished as the gilded tail of the reptile; and many a lesser ship, meant for carrying plunder. The Sea King, Olaf (or Anlaff), was the leader; and as tidings came that their sails had been seen upon the North Sea, more earnest than ever rang out the petition in the Litany, "From the fury of the Northmen, good Lord, deliver us."

Sandwich and Ipswich made no defence, and were plundered; and the fleet then sailed into the mouth of the river Blackwater, as far as Maldon, where the ravagers landed, and began to collect spoil. When, however, they came back to their ships, they found that the tide would not yet serve them to re-embark; and upon the farther bank of the river bristled the spears of a body of warriors, drawn up in battle array, but in numbers far inferior to their own.

Anlaff sent a messenger, over the wooden bridge that crossed the river, to the Earl, who, he understood, commanded this small army. The brave old man, his grey hair hanging down beneath his helmet, stood, sword in hand, at the head of his warriors.

"Lord Earl," said the messenger, "I come to bid thee to yield to us thy treasure, for thy safety. Buy off the fight, and we will ratify a peace with gold!"

"Hear, O thou sailor!" was Brythnoth's answer, "the reply of this people. Instead of Danegeld, thou shalt have from them the edge of the sword, and the point of the spear. Here stands an English Earl, who will defend his earldom and the lands of his King. Point and edge shall judge between us."

Back went the Dane with his message to Anlaff, and the fight began around the bridge, where the Danes long strove to force their way across, but were always driven back by the gallant East-Saxons. The tide had risen, and for some time the two armies only shot at one another with bows and arrows; but when it ebbed, leaving the salt-marshes dry, the stout old Earl's love of fair-play overpowered his prudence, and he sent to offer the enemy a free passage, and an open field in which to measure their strength.

The numbers were too unequal; but the battle was long and bloody before the English could be overpowered. Brythnoth slew one of the chief Danish leaders with his own hand, but not without receiving a wound. He was still able to fight on, though with ebbing strength and failing numbers. His hand was pierced by a dart; but a young boy at his side instantly withdrew it, and, launching it back again, slew the foe who had aimed it. Another Dane, seeing the Earl faint and sinking, advanced to plunder him of his ring and jewelled weapons; but he still had strength to lay the spoiler low with his battle-axe. This was his last blow; he gathered his strength for one last cheer to his brave men, and then, sinking on the ground, he looked up to heaven, exclaiming: "I thank thee, Lord of nations, for all the joys I have known on earth. Now, O mild Creator! have I the utmost need that Thou shouldst grant grace unto my soul, that my spirit may speed to Thee with peace, O King of angels! to pass into Thy keeping. I sue to Thee that Thou suffer not the rebel spirits of hell to vex my parting soul!"

With these words he died; but an aged follower, of like spirit, stood over his corpse, and exhorted his fellows. "Our spirit shall be the hardier, and our soul the greater, the fewer our numbers become!" he cried. "Here lies our chief, the brave, the good, the much-loved lord, who has blessed us with many a gift. Old as I am, I will not yield, but avenge his death, or lay me at his side. Shame befall him that thinks to fly from such a field as this!"

Nor did the English warriors fly. Night came down, at last, upon the battle-field, and saved the lives of the few survivors; but they were forced to leave the body of their lord, and the Danes bore away with them his head as a trophy, and with it, alas! ten thousand pounds of silver from the King, who, in his sluggishness and weakness, had left Brythnoth to fight and die unaided for the cause of the whole nation. One of the retainers, a minstrel in the happy old days of Hadleigh, who had done his part manfully in the battle, had heard these last goodly sayings of his master, and, living on to peaceful days, loved to rehearse them to the sound of his harp, and dwell on the glories of one who could die, but not be defeated.

Ere those better days had come, another faithful-hearted Englishman had given his life for his people. In the year 1012 a huge army, called, from their leader, "Thorkill's Host," were overrunning Kent, and besieging Canterbury. The Archbishop Ælfeg was earnestly entreated to leave the city while yet there was time to escape; but he replied, "None but a hireling would leave his flock in time of danger;" and he supported the resolution of the inhabitants, so that they held out the city for twenty days; and as the wild Danes had very little chance against a well-walled town, they would probably have saved it, had not the gates been secretly opened to them by the traitorous Abbot Ælfman, whom Ælfeg had once himself saved, when accused of treason before the King.

The Danes slaughtered all whom they found in the streets, and the Archbishop's friends tried to keep him in the church, lest he should run upon his fate; but he broke from them, and, confronting the enemy,

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cried: "Spare the guiltless! Is there glory in shedding such blood? Turn your wrath on me! It is I who have denounced your cruelty, have ransomed and re-clad your captives." The Danes seized upon him, and, after he had seen his cathedral burnt and his clergy slain, they threw him into a dungeon, whence he was told he could only come forth upon the payment of a heavy ransom.

His flock loved him, and would have striven to raise the sum; but, miserably used as they were by the enemy, and stripped by the exactions of the Danes, he would not consent that they should be asked for a further contribution on his account. After seven months' patience in his captivity, the Danish chiefs, who were then at Greenwich, desired him to be brought into their camp, where they had just been holding a great feast. It was Easter-eve, and the quiet of that day of calm waiting was disturbed with their songs, and shouts of drunken revelry, as the chained Archbishop was led to the open space where the warriors sat and lay amid the remains of their rude repast. The leader then told him that they had agreed to let him off for his own share with a much smaller payment than had been demanded, provided he would obtain a largesse for them from the King, his master.

"I am not the man," he answered, "to provide Christian flesh for Pagan wolves;" and when again they repeated the demand, "Gold I have none to offer you, save the true wisdom of the knowledge of the living God." And he began, as he stood in the midst, to "reason to them of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come."

They were mad with rage and drink. The old man's voice was drowned with shouts of "Gold, Bishop—give us gold!" The bones and cups that lay around were hurled at him, and he fell to the ground, with the cry, "O Chief Shepherd, guard Thine own children!" As he partly raised himself, axes were thrown at him; and, at last, a Dane, who had begun to love and listen to him in his captivity, deemed it mercy to give him a death-blow with an axe. The English maintained that Ælfeg had died to save his flock from cruel extortion, and held him as a saint and martyr, keeping his death-day (the 19th of April) as a holiday; and when the Italian Archbishop of Canterbury (Lanfranc) disputed his right to be so esteemed, there was strong opposition and discontent. Indeed, our own Prayer-book still retains his name, under the altered form of St. Alphege; and surely no one better merits to be remembered, for having loved his people far better than himself.

GUZMAN EL BUENO

1293

In the early times of Spanish history, before the Moors had been expelled from the peninsula, or the blight of Western gold had enervated the nation, the old honour and loyalty of the Gothic race were high and pure, fostered by constant combats with a generous enemy. The Spanish Arabs were indeed the flower of the Mahometan races, endowed with the vigour and honour of the desert tribes, yet capable of culture and civilization, excelling all other nations of their time in science and art, and almost the equals of their Christian foes in the attributes of chivalry.

Wars with them were a constant crusade, consecrated in the minds of the Spaniards as being in the cause of religion, and yet in some degree freed from savagery and cruelty by the respect exacted by the honourable character of the enemy, and by the fact that the civilization and learning of the Christian kingdoms were far more derived from the Moors than from the kindred nations of Europe.

By the close of the thirteenth century, the Christian kingdoms of Castille and Aragon were descending from their mountain fastnesses, and spreading over the lovely plains of the south, even to the Mediterranean coast, as one beautiful Moorish city after another yielded to the persevering advances of the children of the Goths; and in 1291 the nephew of our own beloved Eleanor of Castille, Sancho V., called *El Bravo*, ventured to invest the city of Tarifa.

This was the western buttress of the gate of the Mediterranean, the base of the northern Pillar of Hercules, and esteemed one of the gates of Spain. By it five hundred years previously had the Moorish enemy first entered Spain at the summons of Count Julian, under their leader Tarif-abu-Zearah, whose name was bestowed upon it in remembrance of his landing there. The form of the ground is said to be like a broken punch-bowl, with the broken part towards the sea. The Moors had fortified the city with a surrounding wall and twenty-six towers, and had built a castle with a lighthouse on a small adjacent island, called Isla Verde, which they had connected with the city by a causeway. Their fortifications, always admirable, have existed ever since, and in 1811, another five hundred years after, were successfully defended against the French by a small force of British troops under the command of Colonel Hugh Gough, better known in his old age as the victor of

Aliwal. The walls were then unable to support the weight of artillery, for which of course they had never been built, but were perfectly effective against escalade.

For six months King Sancho besieged Tarifa by land and sea, his fleet, hired from the Genoese, lying in the waters where the battle of Trafalgar was to be fought. The city at length yielded under stress of famine, but the King feared that he had no resources to enable him to keep it, and intended to dismantle and forsake it, when the Grand Master of the military order of Calatrava offered to undertake the defence with his knights for one year, hoping that some other noble would come forward at the end of that time and take the charge upon himself.

He was not mistaken. The noble who made himself responsible for this post of danger was a Leonese knight of high distinction, by name Alonso Perez de Guzman, already called *El Bueno*, or "The Good," from the high qualities he had manifested in the service of the late king, Don Alonso VI., by whom he had always stood when the present king, Don Sancho, was in rebellion. The offer was readily accepted, and the whole Guzman family removed to Tarifa, with the exception of the eldest son, who was in the train of the Infant Don Juan, the second son of the late king, who had always taken part with his father against his brother, and on Sancho's accession, continued his enmity, and fled to Portugal.

The King of Portugal, however, being requested by Sancho not to permit him to remain there, he proceeded to offer his services to the King of Morocco, Yusuf-ben-Yacoub, for whom he undertook to recover Tarifa, if 5,000 horse were granted to him for the purpose. The force would have been most disproportionate for the attack of such a city as Tarifa, but

Don Juan reckoned on means that he had already found efficacious; when he had obtained the surrender of Zamora to his father by threatening to put to death a child of the lady in command of the fortress.

Therefore, after summoning Tarifa at the head of his 5,000 Moors, he led forth before the gates the boy who had been confided to his care, and declared that unless the city were yielded instantly, Guzman should behold the death of his own son at his hand! Before, he had had to deal with a weak woman on a question of divided allegiance. It was otherwise here. The point was whether the city should be made over to the enemies of the faith and country, whether the plighted word of a loyal knight should be broken. The boy was held in the grasp of the cruel prince, stretching out his hands and weeping as he saw his father upon the walls. Don Alonso's eyes, we are told, filled with tears as he cast one long, last look at his firstborn, whom he might not save except at the expense of his truth and honour.

The struggle was bitter, but he broke forth at last in these words :—" I did not beget a son to be made use of against my country, but that he should serve her against her foes. Should Don Juan put him to death, he will but confer honour on me, true life on my son, and on himself eternal shame in this world and everlasting wrath after death. So far am I from yielding this place or betraying my trust, that in case he should want a weapon for his cruel purpose, there goes my knife!"

He cast the knife in his belt over the walls, and returned to the Castle where, commanding his countenance, he sat down to table with his wife. Loud shouts of horror and dismay almost instantly called him forth again. He was told that Don Juan had been seen to cut the boy's throat in a transport of blind rage. "I thought the enemy had broken in," he calmly said, and went back again.

The Moors themselves were horror-struck at the atrocity of their ally, and as the siege was hopeless they gave it up; and Don Juan, afraid and ashamed to return to Morocco, wandered to the Court of Granada.

King Sancho was lying sick at Alcala de Henares when the tidings of the price of Guzman's fidelity reached him. Touched to the depths of his heart he wrote a letter to his faithful subject, comparing his sacrifice to that of Abraham, confirming to him the surname of Good, lamenting his own inability to come and offer his thanks and regrets, but entreating Guzman's presence at Alcala.

All the way thither, the people thronged to see the man true to his word at such a fearful cost. The Court was sent out to meet him, and the King, after embracing him, exclaimed, "Here learn, ye knights, what are exploits of virtue. Behold your model."

Lands and honours were heaped upon Alonso de Guzman, and they were not a mockery of his loss, for he had other sons to inherit them. He was the staunch friend of Sancho's widow and son in a long and perilous minority, and died full of years and honours. The lands granted to him were those of Medina Sidonia which lie between the rivers Guadiana and Guadalquivir, and they have ever since been held by his descendants, who still bear the honoured name of Guzman, witnessing that the man who gave the life of his firstborn rather than break his faith to the King has left a posterity as noble and enduring as any family in Europe.

WHAT IS BETTER THAN SLAYING A DRAGON

1332

The next story we have to tell is so strange and wild, that it would seem better to befit the cloudy times when history had not yet been disentangled from fable, than the comparatively clear light of the fourteenth century.

It took place in the island of Rhodes. This Greek isle had become the home of the Knights of St. John, or Hospitaliers, an order of sworn brethren who had arisen at the time of the Crusades. At first they had been merely monks, who kept open house for the reception of the poor penniless pilgrims who arrived at Jerusalem in need of shelter, and often of nursing and healing. The good monks not only fed and housed them, but did their best to cure the many diseases that they would catch in the toilsome journey in that feverish climate; and thus it has come to pass that the word *hospitium*, which in Latin only means an inn, has, in modern languages, given birth, on the one hand, to *hotel*, or lodging-house, on the other, to *hospital*, or house of healing. The Hospital at Jerusalem was called after St. John the Almoner, a charitable Bishop of old, and the brethren were hospitaliers. By and by, when the first Crusade was over, and there was a great need of warriors to maintain the Christian cause in Jerusalem, the Hospitaliers thought it a pity that so many strong arms should be prevented from exerting themselves, by the laws that forbade the clergy to do battle, and they obtained permission from the Pope to become warriors as well as monks. They were thus all in one—knights, priests, and nurses; their monasteries were both castles and hospitals; and the sick pilgrim or wounded Crusader was sure of all the best tendance and medical care that the times could afford, as well as of all the ghostly comfort and counsel that he might need, and, if he recovered, he was escorted safely down to the seashore by a party strong enough to protect him from the hordes of robber Arabs. All this was for charity's sake, and without reward. Surely the constitution of the Order was as golden as its badge—the eight-pointed cross—which the brethren wore round their necks. They wore it also in white over their shoulder upon a black mantle. And the knights who had been admitted to the full honours of the Order had a scarlet surcoat, likewise with the white cross, over their armour. The whole brotherhood was under the command of a Grand Master, who was elected in a chapter of all the knights, and to whom all vowed to render implicit obedience.

Good service in all their three capacities had been done by the Order as long as the Crusaders were able to keep a footing in the Holy Land; but they were driven back step by step, and at last, in 1291, their last stronghold at Acre was taken, after much desperate fighting, and the remnant of the Hospitaliers sailed away to the isle of Cyprus, where, after a few years, they recruited their forces, and, in 1307, captured the island of Rhodes, which had been a nest of Greek and Mahometan pirates. Here they remained, hoping for a fresh Crusade to recover the Holy Sepulchre, and in the meantime fulfilling their old mission as the protectors and nurses of the weak. All the Mediterranean Sea was infested by corsairs from the African coast and the Greek isles, and these brave knights, becoming sailors as well as all they had been before, placed their red flag with its white cross at the masthead of many a gallant vessel that guarded the peaceful traveller, hunted down the cruel pirate, and brought home his Christian slave, rescued from labouring at the oar, to the Hospital for rest and tendance. Or their treasures were used in redeeming the captives in the pirate cities. No knight of St. John might offer any ransom for himself save his sword and scarf; but for the redemption of their poor fellow-Christians their wealth was ready, and many a captive was released from toiling in Algiers or Tripoli, or still worse, from rowing the pirate vessels, chained to the oar, between the decks, and was restored to health and returned to his friends, blessing the day he had been brought into the curving harbour of Rhodes, with the fine fortified town of churches and monasteries.

Some eighteen years after the conquest of Rhodes, the whole island was filled with dismay by the ravages of an enormous creature, living in a morass at the foot of Mount St. Stephen, about two miles from the city of Rhodes. Tradition calls it a dragon, and whether it were a crocodile or a serpent is uncertain. There is reason to think that the monsters of early creation were slow in becoming extinct, or it is not impossible that either a crocodile or a python might have been brought over by storms or currents from Africa, and have grown to a more formidable size than usual in solitude among the marshes, while the island was changing owners. The reptile, whatever it might be, was the object of extreme dread; it devoured sheep and cattle, when they came down to the water, and even young shepherd-boys were missing. And the pilgrimage to the Chapel of St. Stephen, on the hill above its lair, was especially a service of danger, for pilgrims were believed to be snapped up by the dragon before they could mount the hills.

Several knights had gone out to attempt the destruction of the creature, but not one had returned, and at last the Grand Master, Helion de Villeneuve, forbade any further attacks to be made. The dragon is said to have been covered with scales that were perfectly impenetrable either to arrows or any cutting weapon; and the severe loss that encounters with him had cost the Order, convinced the Grand Master that he must be let alone.

However, a young knight, named Dieudonné de Gozon, was by no means willing to acquiesce in the decree; perhaps all the less because it came after he had once gone out in quest of the monster, but had returned, by his own confession, without striking a blow. He requested leave of absence, and went home for a time to his father's castle of Gozon, in Languedoc; and there he caused a model of the monster to be made. He had observed that the scales did not protect the animal's belly, though it was almost impossible to get a blow at it, owing to its tremendous teeth, and the furious strokes of its length of tail. He therefore caused this part of his model to be made hollow, and filled with food, and obtaining two fierce young mastiffs, he trained them to fly at the under side of the monster, while he mounted his war-horse, and endeavoured to accustom it likewise to attack the strange shape without swerving.

When he thought the education of horse and dogs complete, he returned to Rhodes; but fearing to be prevented from carrying out his design, he did not land at the city, but on a remote part of the coast, whence he made his way to the chapel of St. Stephen. There, after having recommended himself to God, he left his two French squires, desiring them to return home if he were slain, but to watch and come to him if he killed the dragon, or were only hurt by it. He then rode down the hill-side, and towards the haunt of the dragon. It roused itself at his advance, and at first he charged it with his lance, which was perfectly useless against the scales. His horse was quick to perceive the difference between the true and the false monster, and started back, so that he was forced to leap to the ground; but the two dogs were more staunch, and sprang at the animal, whilst their master struck at it with his sword, but still without reaching a vulnerable part, and a blow from the tail had thrown him down, and the dragon was turning upon him, when the movement left the undefended belly exposed. Both mastiffs fastened on it at once, and the knight, regaining his feet, thrust his sword into it. There was a death-grapple, and finally the servants, coming down the hill, found their knight lying apparently dead under the carcase of the dragon. When they had extricated him, taken off his helmet, and sprinkled him with water, he recovered, and presently was led into the city amid the ecstatic shouts of the whole populace, who conducted him in triumph to the palace of the Grand Master.

Although we may regard this incident as a true Golden Deed, yet in order to accomplish it Dieudonné had violated the command of the Grand Master. What would the latter think of his action? We borrow Schiller's beautiful version of the conversation that took place, as the young knight, pale, with his black mantle rent, his shining armour dinted, his scarlet surcoat stained with blood, came into the Knights' Great Hall.

"Severe and grave was the Master's brow,
Quoth he, 'A hero bold art thou,

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By valour 'tis that knights are known;
A valiant spirit hast thou shown;
But the first duty of a knight,
Now tell, who vows for Christ to fight
And bears the Cross on his coat of mail.'
The listeners all with fear grew pale,
While, bending lowly, spake the knight,
  His cheeks with blushes burning,
'He who the Cross would bear aright
  Obedience must be learning.'"

Even after hearing the account of the conflict, the Grand Master did not abate his displeasure.

" 'My son, the spoiler of the land
Lies slain by thy victorious hand—
Thou art the people's god, but so
Thou art become thine Order's foe;
A deadlier foe thine heart has bred
Than this which by thy hand is dead,
That serpent still the heart defiling
To ruin and to strife beguiling.
It is that spirit rash and bold,
  That scorns the bands of order;
Rages against them uncontrolled
  Till earth is in disorder.

" 'Courage by Saracens is shown,
Submission is the Christian's own;
And where our Saviour, high and holy,
Wandered a pilgrim poor and lowly
Upon that ground with mystery fraught,
The fathers of our Order taught
The duty hardest to fulfil
Is to give up our own self-will—
Thou art elate with glory vain.
  Away then from my sight!
Who can his Saviour's yoke disdain,
  Bears not his Cross aright.'

" An angry cry burst from the crowd,
The hall rang with their tumult loud;
Each knightly brother prayed for grace.
The victor downward bent his face,
Aside his cloak in silence laid,
Kissed the Grand Master's hand, nor stayed.

The Master watched him from the hall,
Then summoned him with loving call,
'Come to embrace me, noble son,
  Thine is the conquest of the soul;
Take up the Cross, now truly won,
  By meekness and by self-control.'"

The probation of Dieudonné is said to have been somewhat longer than the poem represents, but after the claims of discipline had been established, he became a great favourite with stern old Villeneuve, and the dragon's head was set up over the gate of the city, where Thèvenot professed to have seen it in the seventeenth century, and said that it was larger than that of a horse, with a huge mouth and teeth and very large eyes. The name of Rhodes is said to come from a Phœnician word, meaning a serpent, and the Greeks called this the isle of serpents, which is all in favour of the truth of the story. But, on the other hand, such traditions often are prompted by the sight of the fossil skeletons of the dragons of the elder world, and are generally to be met with where such minerals prevail as are found in the northern part of Rhodes. The tale is disbelieved by many, but it is hard to suppose it an entire invention, though the description of the monster may have been exaggerated.

THE KEYS OF CALAIS

1347

Nowhere does the continent of Europe approach Great Britain so closely as at the straits of Dover, and when our sovereigns were full of the vain hope of obtaining the crown of France, or at least of regaining the great possessions that their forefathers had owned as French nobles, there was no spot so coveted by them as the fortress of Calais, the possession of which gave an entrance into France.

Thus it was that when, in 1346, Edward III. had beaten Philippe VI. at the battle of Crecy, the first use he made of his victory was to march upon Calais, and lay siege to it. The walls were exceedingly strong and solid, mighty defences of masonry, of huge thickness and like rocks for solidity, guarded it, and the King knew that it would be useless to attempt a direct assault. Indeed, during all the middle ages, the modes of protecting fortifications were far more efficient than the modes of attacking them. The walls could be made enormously massive, the towers raised to a great height, and the defenders so completely sheltered by battlements that they could not easily be injured, and could take aim from the top of their turrets, or from their loop-hole windows. The gates had absolute little castles of their own, a moat flowed round the walls full of water, and only capable of being crossed by a drawbridge, behind which the portcullis, a grating armed beneath with spikes, was always ready to drop from the archway of the gate and close up the entrance. The only chance of taking a fortress by direct attack was to fill up the moat with earth and faggots, and then raise ladders against the walls; or else to drive engines against the defences, battering-rams which struck them with heavy beams, mangonels which launched stones, sows whose arched wooden backs protected troops of workmen who tried to undermine the wall, and moving towers consisting of a succession of stages or shelves, filled with soldiers, and with a bridge with iron hooks, capable of being launched from the highest storey to the top of the battlements.

The besieged could generally disconcert the battering-ram by hanging beds or mattresses over the walls to receive the brunt of the blow, the sows could be crushed with heavy stones, the towers burnt by well directed flaming missiles, the ladders overthrown, and in general the besiegers suffered a great deal more damage than they could inflict. Cannon had indeed just been brought into use at the battle of Crecy, but they only consisted of iron bars fastened together with hoops, and were as yet of little use, and thus there seemed to be little danger to a well guarded city from any enemy outside the walls.

King Edward arrived before the place with all his victorious army early in August, his good knights and squires arrayed in glittering steel armour, covered with surcoats richly embroidered with their heraldic bearings; his stout men-at-arms, each of whom was attended by three bold followers; and his archers, with their cross-bows to shoot bolts, and long-bows to shoot arrows of a yard long, so that it used to be said that each went into battle with three men's lives under his girdle, namely the three arrows he kept there ready to his hand. With the King was his son, Edward, Prince of Wales, who had just won the golden spurs of knighthood so gallantly at Crecy, when only in his seventeenth year, and likewise the famous Hainault knight, Sir Walter Mauny, and all that was noblest and bravest in England.

This whole glittering army, at their head the King's great royal standard bearing the golden lilies of France quartered with the lions of England, and each troop guided by the square banner, swallow-tailed pennon or pointed pennoncel of their leader, came marching to the gates of Calais, above which floated the blue standard of France with its golden flowers, and with it the banner of the governor, Sir Jean de Vienne.

A herald, in a rich long robe embroidered with the arms of England, rode up to the gate, a trumpet sounding before him, and called upon Sir Jean de Vienne to give up the place to Edward, King of England, and of France, as he claimed to be. Sir Jean made answer that he held the town for Philippe, King of France, and that he would defend it to the last; the herald rode back again and the English began the siege of the city.

At first they only encamped, and the people of Calais must have seen the whole plain covered with the white canvas tents, marshalled round the ensigns of the leaders, and here and there a more gorgeous one displaying the colours of the owner. Still there was no attack upon the walls. The warriors were to be seen walking about in the leathern suits they wore under their armour; or if a party was to be seen with their coats of mail on, helmet on head, and lance in hand, it was not against Calais that they came; they rode out into the country, and by and by might be seen driving back before them herds of cattle and flocks of sheep or pigs that they had seized and taken away from the poor peasants; and at night the sky would show red lights where farms and homesteads had been set on fire. After a time, in front of the tents, the English were to be seen hard at work with beams and boards, setting up huts for themselves, and thatching them over with straw or broom. These wooden houses were all ranged in regular streets, and there was a market-place in the midst, whither every Saturday came farmers and butchers to sell corn and meat, and hay for the horses; and the English merchants and Flemish weavers would come by sea and by land to bring cloth, bread, weapons, and everything that could be needed to be sold in this warlike market.

The Governor, Sir Jean de Vienne, began to perceive that the King did not mean to waste his men by making vain attacks on the strong walls of Calais, but to shut up the entrance by land, and watch the coast by sea so as to prevent any provisions from being taken in, and so to starve him into surrendering. Sir Jean de Vienne, however, hoped that before he should be entirely reduced by famine, the King of France would be able to get together another army and come to his relief, and at any rate he was determined to do his duty, and hold out for his master to the last. But as food was already beginning to grow scarce, he was obliged to turn out such persons as could not fight and had no stores of their own, and so one Wednesday morning he caused all the poor to be brought together, men, women, and children, and sent them all out of the town, to the number of 1,700. It was probably the truest mercy, for he had no food to give them, and they could only have starved miserably within the town, or have hindered him from saving it for his sovereign ; but to them it was dreadful to be driven out of house and home, straight down upon the enemy, and they went along weeping and wailing, till the English soldiers met them and asked why they had come out. They answered that they had been put out because they had nothing to eat, and their sorrowful, famished looks gained pity for them. King Edward sent orders that not only should they go safely through his camp, but that they should all rest, and have the first hearty dinner that they had eaten for many a day, and he sent every one a small sum of money before they left the camp, so that many of them went on their way praying aloud for the enemy who had been so kind to them.

A great deal happened whilst King Edward kept

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watch in his wooden town and the citizens of Calais guarded their walls. England was invaded by King David II. of Scotland, with a great army, and the good Queen Philippa, who was left to govern at home in the name of her little son Lionel, assembled all the forces that were left at home, and sent them to meet him. And one autumn day, a ship crossed the Straits of Dover, and a messenger brought King Edward letters from his Queen to say that the Scots army had been entirely defeated at Neville's Cross, near Durham, and that their King was a prisoner, but that he had been taken by a squire named John Copeland, who would not give him up to her.

King Edward sent letters to John Copeland to come to him at Calais, and when the squire had made his journey, the King took him by the hand saying, "Ha! welcome, my squire, who by his valour has captured our adversary the King of Scotland."

Copeland, falling on one knee, replied, "If God, out of His great kindness, has given me the King of Scotland, no one ought to be jealous of it, for God can, when He pleases, send His grace to a poor squire as well as to a great lord. Sir, do not take it amiss if I did not surrender him to the orders of my lady the Queen, for I hold my lands of you, and my oath is to you, not to her."

The King was not displeased with his squire's sturdiness, but made him a knight, gave him a pension of 500*l.* a year, and desired him to surrender his prisoner to the Queen, as his own representative. This was accordingly done, and King David was lodged in the Tower of London. Soon after, three days before All Saints' Day, there was a large and gay fleet to be seen crossing from the white cliffs of Dover, and the King, his son, and his knights rode down to the landing-place to welcome plump, fair-

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haired Queen Philippa, and all her train of ladies, who had come in great numbers to visit their husbands, fathers, or brothers in the wooden town. Then there was a great court, and numerous feasts and dances, and the knights and squires were constantly striving who could do the bravest deed of prowess to please the ladies. The King of France had placed numerous knights and men-at-arms in the neighbouring towns and castles, and there were constant fights whenever the English went out foraging, and many bold deeds that were much admired were done. The great point was to keep provisions out of the town, and there was much fighting between the French who tried to bring in supplies, and the English who intercepted them. Very little was brought in by land, and Sir Jean de Vienne and his garrison would have been quite starved but for two sailors of Abbeville, named Marant and Mestriel, who knew the coast thoroughly, and often, in the dark autumn evenings, would guide in a whole fleet of little boats, loaded with bread and meat for the starving men within the city. They were often chased by King Edward's vessels, and were sometimes very nearly taken, but they always managed to escape, and thus they still enabled the garrison to hold out.

So all the winter passed; Christmas was kept with brilliant feastings and high merriment by the King and his Queen in their wooden palace outside, and with lean cheeks and scanty fare by the besieged within. Lent was strictly observed perforce by the besieged, and Easter brought a betrothal in the English camp; a very unwilling one on the part of the bridegroom, the young Count of Flanders, who loved the French much better than the English, and had only been tormented into giving his consent by his unruly vassals because they depended on the wool of English sheep for their cloth works. So, though King Edward's daughter Isabel was a beautiful fair-haired girl of fifteen, the young Count would scarcely look at her ; and in the last week before the marriage day, while her robes and her jewels were being prepared, and her father and mother were arranging the presents they should make to all their court on the wedding-day, the bridegroom, when out hawking, gave his attendants the slip, and galloped off to Paris, where he was welcomed by King Philippe.

This made Edward very wrathful, and more than ever determined to take Calais. About Whitsuntide he completed a great wooden castle upon the seashore, and placed in it numerous warlike engines, with forty men-at-arms and 200 archers, who kept such a watch upon the harbour that not even the two Abbeville sailors could enter it, without having their boats crushed and sunk by the great stones that the mangonels launched upon them. The townspeople began to feel what hunger really was, but their spirits were kept up by the hope that their King was at last collecting an army for their rescue.

And Philippe did collect all his forces, a great and noble army, and came one night to the hill of Sangate, just behind the English army, the knights' armour glancing and their pennons flying in the moonlight, so as to be a beautiful sight to the hungry garrison who could see the white tents pitched upon the hill-side. Still there were but two roads by which the French could reach their friends in the town—one along the sea-coast, the other by a marshy road higher up the country, and there was but one bridge by which the river could be crossed. The English King's fleet could prevent any troops from passing along the coast road, the Earl of Derby guarded the bridge, and there was a great tower, strongly fortified, close upon Calais. There were a few skirmishes, but the French King, finding it difficult to force his way to relieve the town, sent a party of knights with a challenge to King Edward to come out of his camp and do battle upon a fair field.

To this Edward made answer, that he had been nearly a year before Calais, and had spent large sums of money on the siege, and that he had nearly become master of the place, so that he had no intention of coming out only to gratify his adversary, who must try some other road if he could not make his way in by that before him.

Three days were spent in parleys, and then, without the slightest effort to rescue the brave, patient men within the town, away went King Philippe of France, with all his men, and the garrison saw the host that had crowded the hill of Sangate melt away like a summer cloud.

August had come again, and they had suffered privation for a whole year for the sake of the King who deserted them at their utmost need. They were in so grievous a state of hunger and distress that the hardiest could endure no more, for ever since Whitsuntide no fresh provisions had reached them. The Governor, therefore, went to the battlements and made signs that he wished to hold a parley, and the King appointed Lord Basset and Sir Walter Mauny to meet him, and appoint the terms of surrender.

The Governor owned that the garrison was reduced to the greatest extremity of distress, and requested that the King would be contented with obtaining the city and fortress, leaving the soldiers and inhabitants to depart in peace.

But Sir Walter Mauny was forced to make answer that the King, his lord, was so much enraged at the delay and expense that Calais had cost him, that he would only consent to receive the whole on unconditional terms, leaving him free to slay, or to ransom, or make prisoners whomsoever he pleased, and he was known to consider that there was a heavy reckoning to pay, both for the trouble the siege had cost him and the damage the Calesians had previously done to his ships.

The brave answer was: " These conditions are too hard for us. We are but a small number of knights and squires, who have loyally served our lord and master as you would have done, and have suffered much ill and disquiet, but we will endure far more than any man has done in such a post, before we consent that the smallest boy in the town shall fare worse than ourselves. I therefore entreat you, for pity's sake, to return to the King and beg him to have compassion, for I have such an opinion of his gallantry that I think he will alter his mind."

The King's mind seemed, however, sternly made up; and all that Sir Walter Mauny and the barons of the council could obtain from him was that he would pardon the garrison and townsmen on condition that six of the chief citizens should present themselves to him, coming forth with bare feet and heads, with halters round their necks, carrying the keys of the town, and becoming absolutely his own to punish for their obstinacy as he should think fit.

On hearing this reply, Sir Jean de Vienne begged Sir Walter Mauny to wait till he could consult the citizens, and, repairing to the market-place, he caused a great bell to be rung, at sound of which all the inhabitants came together in the town-hall. When he told them of these hard terms he could not refrain from weeping bitterly, and wailing and lamentation arose all round him. Should all starve together, or sacrifice their best and most honoured after all suffering in common so long?

Then a voice was heard; it was that of the richest burgher in the town, Eustache de St. Pierre. "Messieurs, high and low," he said, "it would be a sad pity to suffer so many people to die through hunger, if it could be prevented; and to hinder it would be meritorious in the eyes of our Saviour. I have such faith and trust in finding grace before God, if I die to save my townsmen, that I name myself as first of the six."

As the burgher ceased, his fellow-townsmen wept aloud, and many, amid tears and groans, threw themselves at his feet in a transport of grief and gratitude. Another citizen, very rich and respected, rose up and said, "I will be second to my comrade, Eustache." His name was Jean Daire. After him, Jacques Wissant, another very rich man, offered himself as companion to these, who were both his cousins; and his brother Pierre would not be left behind; and two more, unnamed, made up this gallant band of men willing to offer their lives for the rescue of their fellow-townsmen.

Sir Jean de Vienne mounted a little horse—for he had been wounded, and was still lame—and came to the gate with them, followed by all the people of the town, weeping and wailing, yet, for their own sakes and their children's, not daring to prevent the sacrifice. The gates were opened, the governor and the six passed out, and the gates were again shut behind them. Sir Jean then rode up to Sir Walter Mauny, and told him how these burghers had voluntarily offered themselves, begging him to do all in his power to save them; and Sir Walter promised with his whole heart to plead their cause. De Vienne then went back into the town, full of heaviness and anxiety ; and the six citizens were led by Sir Walter to the presence of the King, in his full court. They all knelt down, and the foremost said : " Most gallant King, you see before you six burghers of Calais, who have all been capital merchants, and who bring you the keys of the castle and town. We yield ourselves to your absolute will and pleasure, in order to save the remainder of the inhabitants of Calais, who have suffered much distress and misery. Condescend, therefore, out of your nobleness of mind, to have pity on us."

Strong emotion was excited among all the barons and knights who stood round, as they saw the resigned countenances, pale and thin with patiently-endured hunger, of these venerable men, offering themselves in the cause of their fellow-townsmen. Many tears of pity were shed ; but the King still showed himself implacable, and commanded that they should be led away, and their heads stricken off. Sir Walter Mauny interceded for them with all his might, even telling the King that such an execution would tarnish his honour, and that reprisals would be made on his own garrisons ; and all the nobles joined in entreating pardon for the citizens, but still without effect ; and the headsman had been actually sent for, when Queen Philippa, her eyes streaming with tears, threw herself on her knees amongst the captives, and said, " Ah, gentle sir, since I have crossed the sea, with much danger, to see you, I have never asked you one favour ; now I beg as a boon to myself, for the sake of the Son of the Blessed Mary, and for your love to me, that you will be merciful to these men ! "

For some time the King looked at her in silence ; then he exclaimed : " Dame, dame, would that you had been anywhere than here ! You have entreated in such a manner that I cannot refuse you ; I therefore give these men to you, to do as you please with."

Joyfully did Queen Philippa conduct the six citizens to her own apartments, where she made them welcome, sent them new garments, entertained them with a plentiful dinner, and dismissed them each with a gift of six nobles. After this, Sir Walter Mauny entered the city, and took possession of it; retaining Sir Jean de Vienne and the other knights and squires till they should ransom themselves, and sending out the old French inhabitants; for the King was resolved to people the city entirely with English, in order to gain a thoroughly strong hold of this first step in France.

The King and Queen took up their abode in the city; and the houses of Jean Daire were, it appears, granted to the Queen—perhaps because she considered the man himself as her charge, and wished to secure them for him—and her little daughter Margaret was, shortly after, born in one of his houses. Eustache de St. Pierre was taken into high favour, and was placed in charge of the new citizens whom the King placed in the city.

Indeed, as this story is told by no chronicler but Froissart, some have doubted of it, and thought the violent resentment thus imputed to Edward III. inconsistent with his general character; but it is evident that the men of Calais had given him strong provocation by attacks on his shipping—piracies which are not easily forgiven—and that he considered that he had a right to make an example of them. It is not unlikely that he might, after all, have intended to forgive them, and have given the Queen the grace of obtaining their pardon, so as to excuse himself from the fulfilment of some over-hasty threat. But, however this may have been, nothing can lessen the glory of the six grave and patient men who went forth, by their own free will, to meet what might be a cruel and disgraceful death, in order to obtain the safety of their fellow-townsmen.

THE BATTLE OF SEMPACH

1397

Nothing in history has been more remarkable than the union of the cantons and cities of the little republic of Switzerland. Of differing races, languages, and, latterly, even religions—unlike in habits, tastes, opinions and costumes—they have, however, been held together, as it were, by pressure from without, and one spirit of patriotism has kept the little mountain republic complete for five hundred years.

Originally the lands were fiefs of the Holy Roman Empire, the city municipalities owning the Emperor for their lord; and the great family of Hapsburg, in whom the Empire became at length hereditary, was in reality Swiss, the county that gave them title lying in the canton of Aargau. Rodolf of Hapsburg was elected leader of the burghers of Zurich, long before he was chosen to the Empire; and he continued a Swiss in heart, retaining his mountaineer's open simplicity and honesty to the end of his life. Privileges were granted by him to the cities and the nobles, and the country was loyal and prosperous in his reign.

His son Albert permitted those tyrannies of his bailiffs which goaded the Swiss to their celebrated revolt, and commenced the long series of wars with the House of Hapsburg—or, as it was now termed, of Austria—which finally established their independence.

On the one side, the Dukes of Austria and their ponderous German chivalry, wanted to reduce the cantons and cities to vassalage, not to the Imperial Crown, a distant and scarcely felt obligation, but to the Duchy of Austria; on the other, the hardy mountain peasants and stout burghers well knew their true position, and were aware that to admit the Austrian usurpation would expose their young men to be drawn upon for the Duke's wars, cause their property to be subject to perpetual rapacious exactions, and fill their hills with castles for ducal bailiffs, who would be little better than licensed robbers. No wonder, then, that the generation of William Tell and Arnold Melchthal bequeathed a resolute purpose of resistance to their descendants.

It was in 1397, ninety years since the first assertion of Swiss independence, when Leopold the Handsome, Duke of Austria, a bold but misproud and violent prince, involved himself in one of the constant quarrels with the Swiss that were always arising on account of the insulting exactions of toll and tribute in the Austrian border cities. A sharp war broke out, and the Swiss city of Lucerne took the opportunity of destroying the Austrian castle of Rothemburg, where the tolls had been particularly vexatious, and of admitting to their league the cities of Sempach and Richensee.

Leopold and all the neighbouring nobles united their forces. Hatred and contempt of the Swiss, as low-born and presumptuous, spurred them on; and twenty messengers reached the Duke in one day, with promises of support, in his march against Sempach and Lucerne. He had sent a large force in the direction of Zurich with Johann Bonstetten, and advanced himself with 4,000 horse and 1,400 foot upon Sempach. Zurich undertook its own defence, and the Forest cantons sent their brave peasants to the support of Lucerne and Sempach, but only to the number of 1,300, who, on the 9th of July, took post in the woods around the little lake of Sempach. Meanwhile, Leopold's troops rode round the walls of the little city, insulting the inhabitants; one holding up a halter, which he said was for the chief magistrate; and another, pointing to the reckless waste that his comrades were perpetrating on the fields, shouted, "Send a breakfast to the reapers." The burgomaster pointed to the woods where his allies lay hid, and answered, "My masters of Lucerne and their friends will bring it."

The story of that day was told by one of the burghers who fought in the ranks of Lucerne, a shoemaker, named Albert Tchudi, who was both a brave warrior and a master-singer; and as his ballad was translated by another master-singer, Sir Walter Scott, and is the spirited record of an eye-witness, we will quote from him some of his descriptions of the battle and its Golden Deed.

The Duke's wiser friends proposed to wait till he could be joined by Bonstetten and the troops who had gone towards Zurich, and the Baron von Hasenberg (*i.e.* hare-rock) strongly urged this prudent counsel; but—

"'O Hare-Castle, thou heart of hare!'
Fierce Oxenstiern he cried,
'Shalt see then how the game will fare,'
The taunted knight replied."

"This very noon," said the younger knight to the

Duke, "we will deliver up to you this handful of villains."

> "And thus they to each other said,
> 'Yon handful down to hew
> Will be no boastful tale to tell,
> The peasants are so few.'"

Characteristically enough, the doughty cobbler describes how the first execution that took place was the lopping off the long-peaked toes of the boots that the gentlemen wore chained to their knees, and which would have impeded them on foot; since it had been decided that the horses were too much tired to be serviceable in the action.

> "There was lacing then of helmets bright,
> And closing ranks amain,
> The peaks they hewed from their boot points
> Might well nigh load a wain."

They were drawn up in a solid compact body, presenting an unbroken line of spears, projecting beyond the wall of gay shields and polished impenetrable armour.

The Swiss were not only few in number, but armour was scarce among them; some had only boards fastened on their arms by way of shields, some had halberts, which had been used by their fathers at the battle of Morgarten, others two-handed swords and battle-axes. They drew themselves up in form of a wedge and

> "The gallant Swiss confederates then
> They prayed to God aloud,
> And He displayed His rainbow fair,
> Against a swarthy cloud."

Then they rushed upon the serried spears, but in vain. "The game was nothing sweet."

The banner of Lucerne was in the utmost danger, the Landamman was slain, and sixty of his men, and not an Austrian had been wounded. The flanks of the Austrian host began to advance so as to inclose the small peasant force, and involve it in irremediable destruction. A moment of dismay and stillness ensued. Then Arnold von Winkelried of Unterwalden, with an eagle glance saw the only means of saving his country, and, with the decision of a man who dares by dying to do all things, shouted aloud: "I will open a passage."

> " 'I have a virtuous wife at home,
> A wife and infant son:
> I leave them to my country's care,
> The field shall yet be won!'
> He rushed against the Austrian band
> In desperate career,
> And with his body, breast, and hand,
> Bore down each hostile spear;
> Four lances splintered on his crest,
> Six shivered in his side,
> Still on the serried files he pressed,
> He broke their ranks and died!"

The very weight of the desperate charge of this self-devoted man opened a breach in the line of spears. In rushed the Swiss wedge, and the weight of the nobles' armour and length of their spears was only encumbering. They began to fall before the Swiss blows, and Duke Leopold was urged to fly. "I had rather die honourably than live with dishonour," he said. He saw his standard-bearer struck to the ground, and seizing his banner from his hand, waved it over his head, and threw himself among the thickest of the foe. His corpse was found amid a heap of slain, and no less than 2,000 of his companions perished with him, of whom a third are said to have been counts, barons, and knights.

"Then lost was banner, spear and shield
At Sempach in the flight;
The cloister vaults at Königsfeldt
Hold many an Austrian knight."

The Swiss only lost 200; but, as they were spent with the excessive heat of the July sun, they did not pursue their enemies. They gave thanks on the battle-field to the God of victories, and the next day buried the dead, carrying Duke Leopold and twenty-seven of his most illustrious companions to the Abbey of Königsfeld, where they buried him in the old tomb of his forefathers, the lords of Aargau, who had been laid there in the good old times, before the house of Hapsburg had grown arrogant with success.

As to the master-singer, he tells us of himself that

"A merry man was he, I wot,
The night he made the lay,
Returning from the bloody spot
Where God had judged the day."

On every 9th of July subsequently, the people of the country have been wont to assemble on the battle-field, around four stone crosses which mark the spot. A priest from a pulpit in the open air gives a thanksgiving sermon on the victory that insured the freedom of Switzerland, and another reads the narrative of the battle, and the roll of the brave 200, who, after Winkelried's example, gave their lives in the cause. All this is in the face of the mountains and the lake now lying in summer stillness, and the harvest fields whose crops are secure from marauders; and the congregation then proceed to the small chapel, the walls of which are painted with the deed of Arnold von Winkelried, and the other distinguished achievements of the confederates, and masses are sung for the souls of those who were slain. No wonder that

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men thus nurtured in the memory of such actions were, even to the fall of the French monarchy, among the most trustworthy soldiery of Europe.

THE CARNIVAL OF PERTH

1435

It was bed-time, and the old vaulted chambers of the Dominican monastery at Perth echoed with sounds that would seem incongruous in such a home of austerity, but that the disturbed state of Scotland rendered it the habit of her kings to attach their palaces to convents, that they themselves might benefit by the "peace of the Church," which was in general accorded to all sacred spots.

Thus it was that Christmas and Carnival time of 1435–6 had been spent by the Court in the cloisters of Perth, and the dance, the song, and the tourney had strangely contrasted with the grave and self-denying habits to which the Dominicans were devoted in their neighbouring cells. The festive season was nearly at an end, for it was the 20th of February; but the evening had been more than usually gay, and had been spent in games at chess, tables, or backgammon, reading romances of chivalry, harping and singing. King James himself, brave and handsome, and in the prime of life, was the blithest of the whole joyous party. He was the most accomplished man in his dominions; for though he had been basely kept a prisoner at Windsor throughout his boyhood by Henry IV. of England, an education

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had been bestowed on him far above what he would have otherwise obtained; and he was naturally a man of great ability, refinement, and strength of character. Not only was he a perfect knight on horseback, but in wrestling and running, throwing the hammer, and "putting the stane," he had scarcely a rival, and he was skilled in all the learned lore of the time, wrote poetry, composed music both sacred and profane, and was a complete minstrel, able to sing beautifully and to play on the harp and organ. His Queen, the beautiful Joan Beaufort, had been the lady of his minstrelsy in the days of his captivity, ever since he had watched her walking on the slopes of Windsor Park and wooed her in verses that are still preserved. They had now been eleven years married, and their Court was one bright spot of civilization, refinement, and grace, amid the savagery of Scotland. And now, after the pleasant social evening, the Queen, with her long fair hair unbound, was sitting under the hands of her tire-women, who were preparing her for the night's rest; and the King, in his furred nightgown, was standing before the bright fire on the hearth of the wide chimney, laughing and talking with the attendant ladies

Yet dark hints had already been whispered, which might have cast a shadow over that careless mirth. Always fierce and vindictive, the Scots had been growing more and more lawless and savage ever since the disputed succession of Bruce and Balliol had unsettled all royal authority, and led to one perpetual war with the English. The twenty years of James's captivity had been the worst of all—almost every noble was a robber chief; Scottish borderer preyed upon English borderer, Highlander upon Lowlander, knight upon traveller, every one who had armour upon him who had not; each clan was at deadly feud with its neighbour; blood was shed like water from end to end of the miserable land, and the higher the birth of the offender the greater the impunity he claimed.

Indeed, James himself had been brought next to the throne by one of the most savage and horrible murders ever perpetrated—that of his elder brother, David, by his own uncle; and he himself had probably been only saved from sharing the like fate by being sent out of the kingdom. His earnest words on his return to take the rule of this unhappy realm were these: "Let God but grant me life, and there shall not be a spot in my realm where the key shall not keep the castle, and the bracken bush the cow, though I should lead the life of a dog to accomplish it."

This great purpose had been before James through the eleven years of his reign, and he had worked it out resolutely. The lawless nobles would not brook his ruling hand, and strong and bitter was the hatred that had arisen against him. In many of his transactions he was far from blameless; he was sometimes tempted to craft, sometimes to tyranny; but his object was always a high and kingly one, though he was led by the horrible wickedness of the men he had to deal with more than once to forget that evil is not to be overcome with evil, but with good. In the main, it was his high and uncompromising resolution to enforce the laws upon high and low alike that led to the nobles' conspiracies against him; though, if he had always been true to his purpose of swerving neither to the right nor to the left, he might have avoided the last fatal offence that armed the murderer against his life.

The chief misdoers in the long period of anarchy had been his uncles and cousins; nor was it till after his eldest uncle's death that his return home had been possible. With a strong hand had he avenged upon the princes and their followers the many miseries they had inflicted upon his people; and in carrying out these measures he had seized upon the great earldom of Strathern, which had descended to one of their party in right of his wife, declaring that it could not be inherited by a female. In this he appears to have acted unjustly, from the strong desire to avail himself by any pretext of an opportunity of breaking the overweening power of the great turbulent nobles; and, to make up for the loss, he created the new earldom of Menteith, for the young Malise Graham, the son of the dispossessed earl. But the proud and vindictive Grahams were not thus to be pacified. Sir Robert Graham, the uncle of the young earl, drew off into the Highlands, and there formed a conspiracy among other discontented men who hated the resolute government that repressed their violence. Men of princely blood joined in the plot, and 300 Highland caterans were ready to accompany the expedition that promised the delights of war and plunder.

Even when the hard-worked king was setting forth to enjoy his holiday at Perth, the traitors had fixed upon that spot as the place of his doom; but the scheme was known to so many, that it could not be kept entirely secret, and warnings began to gather round the king. When, on his way to Perth, he was about to cross the Firth of Forth, the wild figure of a Highland woman appeared at his bridle rein, and solemnly warned him "that, if he crossed that water, he would never return alive." He was struck by the apparition, and bade one of his knights to inquire of her what she meant; but the knight must have been a dullard or a traitor, for he told the king that

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the woman was either mad or drunk, and no notice was taken of her warning.

There was likewise a saying abroad in Scotland that the new year, 1436, should see the death of a king; and this same carnival night, James, while playing at chess with a young friend, whom he was wont to call the king of love, laughingly observed that " it must be you or I, since there are but two kings in Scotland—therefore, look well to yourself."

Little did the blithe monarch guess that at that moment one of the conspirators, touched by a moment's misgiving, was hovering round, seeking in vain for an opportunity of giving him warning; that even then his chamberlain and kinsman, Sir Robert Stewart, was enabling the traitors to place boards across the moat for their passage, and to remove the bolts and bars of all the doors in their way. And the Highland woman was at the door, earnestly entreating to see the King, if but for one moment! The message was even brought to him, but, alas! he bade her wait till the morrow, and she turned away, declaring that she should never more see his face.

And now, as before said, the feast was over, and the King stood, gaily chatting with his wife and her ladies, when the clang of arms was heard, and the glare of torches in the court below flashed on the windows. The ladies flew to secure the doors. Alas! the bolts and bars were gone! Too late the warnings returned upon the King's mind, and he knew it was he alone who was sought. He tried to escape by the windows, but here the bars were but too firm. Then he seized the tongs, and tore up a board in the floor, by which he let himself down into the vault below, just as the murderers came rushing along the passage, slaying on their way a page named Walter Straiton.

There was no bar to the door. Yes there was. Catherine Douglas, worthy of her name, worthy of the cognizance of the bleeding heart, thrust her arm through the empty staples to gain for her sovereign a few moments more for escape and safety! But though true as steel, the brave arm was not as strong. It was quickly broken. She was thrust fainting aside, and the ruffians rushed in. Queen Joan stood in the midst of the room, with her hair streaming round her, and her mantle thrown hastily on. Some of the wretches even struck and wounded her, but Graham called them off, and bade them search for the King. They sought him in vain in every corner of the women's apartments, and dispersed through the other rooms in search of their prey. The ladies began to hope that the citizens and nobles in the town were coming to their help, and that the King might have escaped through an opening that led from the vault into the tennis-court. Presently, however, the King called to them to draw him up again, for he had not been able to get out of the vault, having a few days before caused the hole to be bricked up, because his tennis-balls used to fly into it and be lost. In trying to draw him up by the sheets, Elizabeth Douglas, another of the ladies, was actually pulled down into the vault; the noise was heard by the assassins, who were still watching outside, and they returned.

There is no need to tell of the foul and cruel slaughter that ensued, nor of the barbarous vengeance that visited it. Our tale is of golden, not of brazen deeds; and if we have turned our eyes for a moment to the Carnival of Perth, it is for the sake of the King, who was too upright for his bloodthirsty subjects, and, above all, for that of the noble-hearted lady whose frail arm was the guardian of her sovereign's life in the extremity of peril.

SIR THOMAS MORE'S DAUGHTER

1535

A NOBLE example of womanly devotion, shown both in her dutifulness to the living, and in her tender care for the dead, is furnished by Margaret, the favourite daughter of Sir Thomas More, the true-hearted, faithful statesman of King Henry VIII.

Margaret's home had been an exceedingly happy one. Her father, Sir Thomas More, was a man of the utmost worth, and was both earnestly religious and conscientious, and of a sweetness of manner and playfulness of fancy that endeared him to every one. He was one of the most affectionate and dutiful of sons to his aged father, Sir John More; and when the son was Lord Chancellor, while the father was only a judge, Sir Thomas, on his way to his court, never failed to kneel down before his father in public, and ask his blessing. Never was the old saying, that a dutiful child has dutiful children, better exemplified than in the More family. In the times when it was usual for parents to be very stern with children, and keep them at a great distance, sometimes making them stand in their presence, and striking them for any slight offence, Sir Thomas More thought it his duty to be friendly and affectionate with them, to talk to them, and to enter into their confidence;

and he was rewarded with their full love and duty.

He had four children—Margaret, Elizabeth, Cicely, and John. His much-loved wife died when they were all very young, and he thought it for their good to marry a widow, Mrs. Alice Middleton, with one daughter named Margaret, and he likewise adopted an orphan called Margaret Giggs. With this household he lived in a beautiful large house at Chelsea, with well-trimmed gardens sloping down to the Thames; and this was the resort of the most learned and able men, both English and visitors from abroad, who delighted in pacing the shady walks, listening to the wit and wisdom of Sir Thomas, or conversing with the daughters, who had been highly educated, and had much of their father's humour and sprightliness. Even Henry VIII. himself, then one of the most brilliant and graceful gentlemen of his time, would sometimes arrive in his royal barge, and talk theology or astronomy with Sir Thomas; or, it might be, crack jests with him and his daughters, or listen to the music in which all were skilled, even Lady More having been persuaded in her old age to learn to play on various instruments, including the flute. The daughters were early given in marriage, and, with their husbands, continued to live under their father's roof. Margaret's husband was William Roper, a young lawyer, of whom Sir Thomas was very fond, and his household at Chelsea was thus a large and joyous family home of children and grandchildren, delighting in the kind, bright smiles of the open face under the square cap, that the great painter Holbein has sent down to us as a familiar sight.

But these glad days were not to last for ever. The trying times of the reign of Henry VIII. were beginning, and the question had been stirred whether the King's marriage with Katherine of Arragon had been a lawful one. When Sir Thomas More found that the King was determined to take his own course, and to divorce himself without permission from the Pope, it was against his conscience to remain in office when acts were being done which he could not think right or lawful. He therefore resigned his office as Lord Chancellor, and, feeling himself free from the load and temptation, his gay spirits rose higher than ever. His manner of communicating the change to his wife, who had been very proud of his state and dignity, was thus. At church, when the service was over, it had always been the custom for one of his attendants to summon Lady More by coming to her closet door, and saying, "Madam, my lord is gone." On the day after his resignation, he himself stepped up, and with a low bow said, "Madam, my lord is gone," for in good sooth he was no longer Chancellor, but only plain Sir Thomas.

He thoroughly enjoyed his leisure, but he was not long left in tranquillity. When Anne Boleyn was crowned, he was invited to be present, and twenty pounds were offered him to buy a suitably splendid dress for the occasion; but his conscience would not allow him to accept the invitation, though he well knew the terrible peril he ran by offending the King and Queen. Thenceforth there was a determination to ruin him. First, he was accused of taking bribes when administering justice. It was said that a gilt cup had been given to him as a new-year's gift, by one lady, and a pair of gloves filled with gold coins by another; but it turned out, on examination, that he had drunk the wine out of the cup, and accepted the gloves, because it was ill manners to refuse a lady's gift, yet he had in both cases given back the gold.

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Next, a charge was brought that he had been leaguing with a half-crazy woman called the Nun of Kent, who had said violent things about the King. He was sent for to be examined by Henry and his Council, and this he well knew was the interview on which his safety would turn, since the accusation was a mere pretext, and the real purpose of the King was to see whether he would go along with him in breaking away from Rome—a proceeding that Sir Thomas, both as churchman and as lawyer, could not think legal. Whether we agree or not in his views, it must always be remembered that he ran into danger by speaking the truth, and doing what he thought right. He really loved his master, and he knew the humour of Henry VIII., and the temptation was sore ; but when he came down from his conference with the King in the Tower, and was rowed down the river to Chelsea, he was so merry that William Roper, who had been waiting for him in the boat, thought he must be safe, and said, as they landed and walked up the garden—

" I trust, sir, all is well, since you are so merry ? "

" It is so, indeed, son, thank God ! "

" Are you then, sir, put out of the bill ? "

" Wouldest thou know, son, why I am so joyful ? In good faith I rejoice that I have given the devil a foul fall ; because I have with those lords gone so far that without great shame I can never go back," he answered, meaning that he had been enabled to hold so firmly to his opinions, and speak them out so boldly, that henceforth the temptation to dissemble them and please the King would be much lessened. That he had held his purpose in spite of the weakness of mortal nature, was true joy to him, though he was so well aware of the consequences that, when his daughter Margaret came to him the next day with

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the glad tidings that the charge against him had been given up, he calmly answered her: "In faith, Meg, what is put off is not given up."

One day, when he had asked Margaret how the world went with the new Queen, and she replied, "In faith, father, never better; there is nothing else in the court but dancing and sporting," he replied, with sad foresight, "Never better. Alas, Meg! it pitieth me to remember unto what misery, poor soul, she will shortly come. These dances of hers will prove such dances that she will spurn off our heads like footballs, but it will not be long ere her head will take the same dance."

So entirely did he expect to be summoned by a pursuivant that he thought it would lessen the fright of his family if a sham summons were brought. So he caused a great knocking to be made while all were at dinner, and the sham pursuivant went through all the forms of citing him, and the whole household were in much alarm, till he explained the jest; but the earnest came only a few days afterwards. On the 13th of April of 1534, arrived the real pursuivant to summon him to Lambeth, there to take the oath of supremacy, declaring that the King was the head of the Church of England, and that the Pope had no authority there. He knew what the refusal would bring on him. He went first to church, and then, not trusting himself to be unmanned by his love for his children and grandchildren, instead of letting them, as usual, come down to the water-side, with tender kisses and merry farewells, he shut the wicket-gate of the garden upon them all, and only allowed his son-in-law Roper to accompany him, whispering into his ear, "I thank our Lord, the field is won."

Conscience had triumphed over affection, and he was thankful, though for the last time he looked on

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the trees he had planted, and the happy home he had loved. Before the Council, he undertook to swear to some clauses in the oath which were connected with the safety of the realm; but he refused to take that part of the oath which related to the King's power over the Church. It is said that the King would thus have been satisfied, but that the Queen urged him further. At any rate, after being four days under the charge of the Abbot of Westminster, Sir Thomas was sent to the Tower of London. There his wife—a plain, dull woman, utterly unable to understand the point of conscience—came and scolded him for being so foolish as to lie there in a close, filthy prison, and be shut up with rats and mice, instead of enjoying the favour of the King. He heard all she had to say, and answered, " I pray thee, good Mrs. Alice, tell me one thing—is not this house as near heaven as my own ? " To which she had no better answer than " Tilly vally, tilly vally." But, in spite of her folly, she loved him faithfully; and when all his property was seized, she sold even her clothes to obtain necessaries for him in prison.

His chief comfort was, however, in visits and letters from his daughter Margaret, who was fully able to enter into the spirit that preferred death to transgression. He was tried in Westminster Hall, on the 1st of July, and, as he had fully expected, sentenced to death. He was taken back along the river to the Tower. On the wharf his loving Margaret was waiting for her last look. She broke through the guard of soldiers with bills and halberds, threw her arms round his neck, and kissed him, unable to say any word but " Oh, my father!—oh, my father! " He blessed her, and told her that whatsoever she might suffer, it was not without the will of God, and she must therefore be patient. After having once parted with him, she suddenly turned back again, ran to him, and, clinging round his neck, kissed him over and over again—a sight at which the guards themselves wept. She never saw him again; but the night before his execution he wrote to her a letter with a piece of charcoal, with tender remembrances to all the family, and saying to her, "I never liked your manner better than when you kissed me last; for I am most pleased when daughterly love and dear charity have no leisure to look to worldly courtesy." He likewise made it his especial request that she might be permitted to be present at his burial.

His hope was sure and stedfast, and his heart so firm that he did not even cease from humorous sayings. When he mounted the crazy ladder of the scaffold he said, "Master Lieutenant, I pray you see me safe up; and for my coming down let me shift for myself." And he desired the executioner to give him time to put his beard out of the way of the stroke, "since that had never offended his Highness."

His body was given to his family, and laid in the tomb he had already prepared in Chelsea Church; but the head was set up on a pole on London Bridge. The calm, sweet features were little changed, and the loving daughter gathered courage as she looked up at them. How she contrived the deed, is not known; but, before many days had passed, the head was no longer there, and Mrs. Roper was said to have taken it away. She was sent for to the Council, and accused of the stealing of her father's head. She shrank not from avowing that thus it had been, and that the head was in her own possession. One story says that, as she was passing under the bridge in a boat, she looked up, and said, "That head has often lain in my lap; I would that it would now fall into it." And at that moment it actually fell, and she received it. It is far more likely that she went by design, at the same time as some faithful friend on the bridge, who detached the precious head, and dropped it down to her in her boat beneath. Be this as it may, she owned before the cruel-hearted Council that she had taken away and cherished the head of the man whom they had slain as a traitor. However, Henry VIII. was not a Creon, and our Christian Antigone was dismissed unhurt by the Council, and allowed to retain possession of her treasure. She caused it to be embalmed, kept it with her wherever she went, and when, nine years afterwards, she died (in the year 1544), it was laid in her coffin in the " Roper aisle " of St. Dunstan's Church, at Canterbury.

FORT ST. ELMO

1565

The white cross of the Order of St. John waved on the towers of Rhodes for two hundred and fifty-five years. In 1552, after a desperate resistance, the Turks, under their great Sultan, Solyman the Magnificent, succeeded in driving the Knights Hospitaliers from their beautiful home, and they were again cast upon the world.

They were resolved, however, to continue their old work of protecting the Mediterranean travellers, and thankfully accepted, as a gift from the Emperor Charles V., the little islet of Malta as their new station. It was a great contrast to their former home, being little more than a mere rock rising steeply out of the

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sea, white, glaring, and with very shallow earth, unfit to bear corn, though it produced plenty of oranges, figs, and melons,—with little water and no wood,—the buildings wretched, and for the most part uninhabited, and the few people a miserable mongrel set, part Arab, part Greek, part Sicilian, and constantly kept down by the descents of the Moorish pirates, who used to land in the unprotected bays, and carry off all the wretched beings they could catch, to sell for slaves. It was a miserable exchange from fertile Rhodes, which was nearly five times larger than this barren rock; but the Knights only wanted a hospital, a fortress, and a harbour; and this last they found in the deeply-indented northern shore, while they made the two first. Only a few years had passed before the dreary Città Notabile had become in truth a notable city, full of fine castle-like houses, infirmaries, and noble churches, and fenced in with mighty walls and battlements—country houses were perched upon the rocks—the harbours were fortified, and filled with vessels of war—and deep vaults were hollowed out in the rock, in which corn was stored sufficient to supply the inhabitants for many months.

Solyman the Magnificent resolved, in his old age, to sweep these obstinate Christians from the seas, and, only twelve years after the siege of Rhodes, prepared an enormous armament, which he united with those of the Barbary pirates, and placed under the command of Mustafa and Piali, his two bravest pashas, and Dragut, a terrible Algerine corsair, who had already made an attempt upon the island, but had been repulsed by the good English knight, Sir Nicholas Upton. Without the advice of this pirate the Sultan desired that nothing should be undertaken.

The Grand Master who had to meet this tremendous danger was Jean Parisot de la Valette, a brave and resourceful man, as noted for his piety and tenderness to the sick in the infirmaries as for his unflinching courage. When he learnt the intentions of the Sultan, he began by collecting a Chapter of his Order, and, after laying his tidings before them, said: "A formidable army and a cloud of barbarians are about to burst on this isle. Brethren, they are the enemies of Jesus Christ. The question is the defence of the Faith, and whether the Gospel shall yield to the Koran. God demands from us the life that we have already devoted to Him by our profession. Happy they who in so good a cause shall first consummate their sacrifice. But, that we may be worthy, my brethren, let us hasten to the altar, there to renew our vows; and may to each one of us be imparted, by the very Blood of the Saviour of mankind, and by faithful participation in His Sacraments, that generous contempt of death that can alone render us invincible."

With these words he led the way to the church, and there was not an individual knight who did not on that day confess and receive the Holy Communion; after which they were as new men—all disputes, all trivialities and follies were laid aside and the whole community awaited the siege like persons under a solemn dedication.

The chief harbour of Malta is a deep bay, turned towards the north, and divided into two lesser bays by a large tongue of rock, on the point of which stood a strong castle, called Fort St. Elmo. The gulf to the westward has a little island in it, and both gulf and islet are called Marza Muscat. The gulf to the east, called the Grand Port, was again divided by three fingers of rock projecting from the mainland, at right angles to the tongue that bore Fort St. Elmo. Each finger was armed with a strong talon—the Castle of La Sangle to the east, the Castle of St. Angelo in the middle, and Fort Ricasoli to the west. Between St. Angelo and La Sangle was the harbour where all the ships of war were shut up at night by an immense chain; and behind was il Borgo, the chief fortification in the island. Città Notabile and Gozo were inland, and their fate would depend upon that of the defences of the harbour. To defend all this, the Grand Master could only number 700 knights and 8,500 soldiers. He sent to summon home all those of the Order who were dispersed in the different commanderies in France, Spain, and Germany, and entreated aid from the Spanish king, Philip II., who wished to be considered as the prime champion of Roman Catholic Christendom, and who alone had the power of assisting him. The Duke of Alva, viceroy for Philip in Sicily, made answer that he would endeavour to relieve the Order, if they could hold out Fort St. Elmo till the fleet could be got together; but that if this castle were once lost, it would be impossible to bring them aid, and they must be left to their fate.

The Grand Master divided the various posts to the knights according to their countries. The Spaniards under the Commander De Guerras, Bailiff of Negropont, had the Castle of St. Elmo; the French had Port de la Sangle; the Germans, and the few English knights whom the Reformation had left, were charged with the defence of the Port of the Borgo, which served as head-quarters, and the Commander Copier, with a body of troops, was to remain outside the town and watch and harass the enemy.

On the 18th of May, 1565, the Turkish fleet came in sight. It consisted of 159 ships, rowed by Christian slaves between the decks, and carrying 30,000 Janissaries and Spahis, the terrible warriors to whom the Turks owed most of their victories, and after them came, spreading for miles over the blue waters, a multitude of ships of burthen bringing the horses of the Spahis and such heavy battering cannon as rendered the dangers of a siege infinitely greater than in former days. These Janissaries were a strange, distorted resemblance of the knights themselves, for they were bound in a strict brotherhood of arms, and were not married, so as to care for nothing but each other, the Sultan, and the honour of their troop. They were not dull, apathetic Turks, but chiefly natives of Circassia and Georgia, the land where the human race is most beautiful and nobly formed.

These were chiefly troops for the land attack, and they were set on shore at Port St. Thomas, where the commanders, Mustafa and Piali, held a council, to decide where they should first attack. Piali wished to wait for Dragut, who was daily expected, but Mustafa was afraid of losing time, and of being caught by the Spanish fleet, and insisted on at once laying siege to Fort St. Elmo, which was, he thought, so small that it could not hold out more than five or six days.

Indeed, it could not hold above 300 men, but these were some of the bravest of the knights, and as it was only attacked on the land side, they were able to put off boats at night and communicate with the Grand Master and their brethren in the Borgo. The Turks set up their batteries; and fired their enormous cannon shot upon the fortifications. One of their terrible pieces of ordnance carried stone balls of 160 lbs., and no wonder that stone and mortar gave way before it, and that a breach was opened in a few days' time. That night, when, as usual, boat-loads of wounded men were transported across to the Borgo, the Bailiff of Negropont sent the knight

La Cerda to the Grand Master to give an account of the state of things and ask for help. La Cerda spoke strongly, and, before a great number of knights, declared that there was no chance of so weak a place holding out for more than a week.

"What has been lost," said the Grand Master, "since you cry out for help ?"

"Sir," replied La Cerda, "the castle may be regarded as a patient in extremity and devoid of strength, who can only be sustained by continual remedies and constant succour."

"I will be doctor myself," replied the Grand Master, "and will bring others with me who, if they cannot cure you of fear, will at least be brave enough to prevent the infidels from seizing the fort."

The fact was, as he well knew, that the little fort could not hold out long, and he grieved over the fate of his knights; but time was everything, and the fate of the whole isle depended upon the white cross being still on that point of land when the tardy Sicilian fleet should set sail. He was one who would ask no one to run into perils that he would not share, and he was bent on throwing himself into St. Elmo, and being rather buried under the ruins than to leave the Mussulmans free a moment sooner than could be helped to attack the Borgo and Castle of St. Angelo. But the whole Chapter of Knights entreated him to abstain, and so many volunteered for this desperate service, that the only difficulty was to choose among them. Indeed, La Cerda had done the garrison injustice; no one's heart was failing but his own; and the next day there was a respite, for a cannon shot from St. Angelo falling into the enemy's camp, shattered a stone, a splinter of which struck down Piali Pasha. He was thought dead, and the camp and fleet were in confusion, which enabled the Grand

Master to send off his nephew, the Chevalier de la Valette Cornusson, to Messina, to entreat the Viceroy of Sicily to hasten to their relief ; to give him a chart of the entrance of the harbour, and a list of signals, and to desire in especial that two ships belonging to the Order, and filled with the knights who had hurried from distant lands too late for the beginning of the siege, might come to him at once. To this the Viceroy returned a promise that at latest the fleet should sail on the 15th of June, adding an exhortation to him at all sacrifices to maintain St. Elmo. This reply the Grand Master transmitted to the garrison, and it nerved them to fight even with more patience and self-sacrifice. A desperate sally was led by the Chevalier de Médran, who fought his way into the trenches where the Turkish cannon were planted, and at first drove all before him ; but the Janissaries rallied and forced back the Christians out of the trenches. Unfortunately there was a high wind, which drove the smoke of the artillery down on the counter-scarp (the slope of masonry facing the rampart), and while it was thus hidden from the Christians, the Turks succeeded in effecting a lodgment there, fortifying themselves with trees and sacks of earth and wool. When the smoke cleared off, the knights were dismayed to see the horse-tail ensigns of the Janissaries so near them, and cannon already prepared to batter the ravelin, or outwork protecting the gateway.

La Cerda proposed to blow this fortification up, and abandon it, but no other knight would hear of deserting an inch of wall while it could yet be held.

But again the sea was specked with white sails from the south-east. Six galleys came from Egypt, bearing 900 troops—Mameluke horsemen, troops recruited much like the Janissaries and quite as formidable. These ships were commanded by Uluc-ciali, an Italian, who had denied his faith and become a Mahometan, and was thus regarded with special horror by the chivalry of Malta. And the swarm thickened for a few days more; like white-winged and beautiful but venomous insects hovering round their prey, the graceful Moorish galleys and galliots came up from the south, bearing 600 dark-visaged, white-turbaned, lithe-limbed Moors from Tripoli, under Dragut himself. The thunders of all the guns roaring forth their salute of honour told the garrison that the most formidable enemy of all had arrived. And now their little white rock was closed in on every side, with nothing but its own firmness to be its aid.

Dragut did not approve of having begun with attacking Fort St. Elmo; he thought that the inland towns should have been first taken, and Mustafa offered to discontinue the attack, but this the corsair said could not now be done with honour, and under him the attack went on more furiously than ever. He planted a battery of four guns on the point guarding the entrance of Marza Muscat, the other gulf, and the spot has ever since been called Dragut's Point. Strange to say, the soldiers in the ravelin fell asleep, and thus enabled the enemy to scramble up by climbing on one another's shoulders and enter the place. As soon as the alarm was given, the Bailiff of Negropont, with a number of knights, rushed into the ravelin and fought with the utmost desperation, but all in vain; they never succeeded in dislodging the Turks, and had almost been followed by them into the Fort itself. Only the utmost courage turned back the enemy at last, and, it was believed, with a loss of 3,000. The Order had twenty knights and a hundred soldiers killed, with many more wounded.

The 15th of June was passed. Nothing would make the Sicilian Viceroy move, nor even let the war-ships of the Order sail with their own knights, and the little fort that had been supposed unable to hold out a week, had for full a month resisted every attack of the enemy.

At last Dragut, though severely wounded while reconnoitring, set up a battery on the hill of Calcara, so as to command the strait, and hinder the succours from being sent across to the fort. The wounded were laid down in the chapel and the vaults, and well it was for them that each knight of the Order could be surgeon and nurse. One good swimmer crossed under cover of darkness with their last messages, and La Valette prepared five armed boats for their relief; but the enemy had fifteen already in the bay, and communication was entirely cut off. It was the night before the 23rd of June when these brave men knew their time was come. All night they prayed, and prepared themselves to die by giving one another the last rites of the Church, and at daylight each repaired to his post, those who could not walk being carried in chairs, and sat ghastly figures, sword in hand, on the brink of the breach, ready for their last fight.

By the middle of the day every Christian knight in St. Elmo had died upon his post, and the little heap of ruins was in the hands of the enemy. Dragut was dying of his wound, but just lived to hear that the place was won, when it had cost the Sultan 8,000 men. Well might Mustafa say, " If the son has cost us so much, what will the father do ? "

It would be too long to tell the glorious story of the three months' further siege of the Borgo. The patience and resolution of the knights was unshaken, though daily there were tremendous battles, and week after week passed by without the tardy relief from Spain. It is believed that Philip II. thought that the Turks would exhaust themselves against the Order, and forbade his Viceroy to hazard his fleet; but at last he was shamed into permitting the armament to be fitted out.

At last, on the 1st of September, the fleet really set sail, but it hovered cautiously about on the farther side of the island, and only landed 6,000 men, and then returned to Sicily. However, the tidings of its approach had spread such a panic among the Turkish soldiers, who were worn out and exhausted by their exertions, that they hastily raised the siege, abandoned their heavy artillery, and, removing their garrison from Fort St. Elmo, re-embarked in haste and confusion. No sooner, however, was the Pasha in his ship than he became ashamed of his precipitation, more especially when he learnt that the relief that had put 16,000 men to flight consisted only of 6,000, and he resolved to land and give battle; but his troops were angry and unwilling, and were actually driven out of their ships by blows.

In the meantime, the Grand Master had again placed a garrison at St. Elmo, which the Turks had repaired and restored, and once more the cross of St. John waved on the end of its tongue of land, to greet the Spanish allies. A battle was fought with the newly-arrived troops, in which the Turks were defeated; they again took to their ships, and the Viceroy of Sicily, from Syracuse, beheld their fleet in full sail for the East.

Meantime, the gates of the Borgo were thrown open to receive the brethren and friends who had been so long held back from coming to the relief of the home of the Order. Four months' siege, by the heaviest artillery in Europe, had shattered the walls and

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destroyed the streets, till, to the eyes of the new-comers, the town looked like a place taken by assault, and sacked by the enemy; and of the whole garrison, knights, soldiers, and sailors all together only 600 were left able to bear arms, and they for the most part covered with wounds. The Grand Master and his surviving knights could hardly be recognized, so pale and altered were they by wounds and excessive fatigue; their hair, beards, dress, and armour showing that for four months they had hardly undressed, or lain down unarmed. The new-comers could not retain their tears, but all together proceeded to church to return thanks for the conclusion of their perils and afflictions.

The Borgo was thenceforth called Città Vittoriosa; but La Valette decided on building the chief town of the isle on the peninsula of Fort St. Elmo, and in this work he spent his latter days, till he was killed by a sun-stroke while superintending the new works of the city which is deservedly known by his name, as Valetta.

The Order of St. John has lost much of its character, and was finally swept from Malta in the general confusion of the Revolutionary wars. The British crosses now float in the harbour of Malta; but the steep white rocks must ever bear the memory of the self-devoted endurance of the beleaguered knights, and, foremost of all, of those who perished in St. Elmo, in order that the signal banner might to the very last summon the tardy Viceroy to their aid.

THE VOLUNTARY CONVICT

1622

In the early summer of the year 1605, a coasting vessel was sailing along the beautiful Gulf of Lyons, the wind blowing gently in the sails, the blue Mediterranean lying glittering to the south, and the curved line of the French shore rising in purple and green tints, dotted with white towns and villages. Suddenly three light, white-sailed ships appeared in the offing, and the captain's practised eye detected that the wings that bore them were those of a bird of prey. He knew them for African brigantines, and though he made all sail, it was impossible to run into a French port, as on, on they came, not entirely depending on the wind, but, like steamers, impelled by unseen powers within them. Alas! that power was not the force of innocent steam, but the arms of Christian rowers chained to the oar. Sure as the pounce of a hawk upon a partridge was the swoop of the corsairs upon the French vessel. A demand for surrender followed, but the captain boldly refused, and armed his crew, bidding them stand to their guns. But the fight was too unequal, the brave little ship was disabled, the pirates boarded her, and, after a sharp fight on deck, three of the crew lay dead, all the rest were wounded, and the vessel was the prize of the pirates. The captain was at once killed, in revenge for his resistance, and all the rest of the crew and passengers were put in chains. Among these passengers was a young priest named Vincent de Paul, the son of a farmer in Languedoc, who had used his utmost endeavours to educate his son for the ministry, even selling the oxen from the plough to provide for the college expenses. A small legacy had just fallen to the young man, from a relation who had died at Marseilles; he had been thither to receive it, and had been persuaded by a friend to return home by sea. And this was the result of the pleasant voyage. The legacy was the prey of the pirates, and Vincent, severely wounded by an arrow, and heavily chained, lay half stifled in a corner of the hold of the ship, a captive probably for life to the enemies of the faith. It was true that France had scandalized Europe by making peace with the Dey of Tunis, but this was a trifle to the corsairs; and when, after seven days' further cruising, they put into the harbour of Tunis, they drew up an account of their capture, calling it a Spanish vessel, to prevent the French Consul from claiming the prisoners.

The captives had the coarse blue and white garments of slaves given them, and were walked five or six times through the narrow streets and bazaars of Tunis, by way of exhibition. They were then brought back to their ship, and the purchasers came thither to bargain for them. They were examined at their meals, to see if they had good appetites; their sides were felt like those of oxen; their teeth looked at like those of horses; their wounds were searched, and they were made to run and walk to show the play of their limbs. All this Vincent endured with patient submission, constantly supported by the thought of Him who took upon Him the form of a servant for our sakes; and he did his best, ill as he was, to give his companions the same confidence.

Weak and unwell, Vincent was sold cheap to a fisherman; but in his new service it soon became apparent that the sea made him so ill as to be of no use, so he was sold again to one of the Moorish physicians, the like of whom may still be seen smoking their pipes sleepily, under their white turbans, cross-legged, among the drugs in their shop windows—these being small open spaces beneath the beautiful stone lace-work of the Moorish lattices. The physician was a great chemist and distiller, and for four years had been seeking the philosopher's stone, which was supposed to be the secret of making gold. He found his slave's learning and intelligence so useful that he grew very fond of him, and tried hard to persuade him to turn Mahometan, offering him not only liberty, but the inheritance of all his wealth, and the secrets that he had discovered.

The Christian priest felt the temptation sufficiently to be always grateful for the grace that had carried him through it. At the end of a year, the old doctor died, and his nephew sold Vincent again. His next master was a native of Nice, who had not held out against the temptation to renounce his faith in order to avoid a life of slavery, but had become a renegade, and had the charge of one of the farms of the Dey of Tunis. The farm was on a hill-side in an extremely hot and exposed region, and Vincent suffered much from being there set to field labour, but he endured all without a murmur. His master had three wives, and one of them, who was of Turkish birth, used often to come out and talk to him, asking him many questions about his religion. Sometimes she asked him to sing, and he would then chant the psalm of the captive Jews: "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept"; and others of the "songs" of his Zion. The woman at last told her husband that he must have been wrong in forsaking a religion of which her slave had told her such wonderful things. Her words had such an effect on the renegade that he sought the slave, and in conversation with him soon came to a full sense of his own miserable position as an apostate. A change of religion on the part of a Mahometan is, however, always visited with death, both to the convert and his instructor. Vincent's master, terrified at such perils, resolved to make his escape in secret with his slave. It is disappointing to hear nothing of his wife; and not to know whether she would not or could not accompany them. All we know is that master and slave trusted themselves alone to a small bark, and, safely crossing the Mediterranean, landed at Aigues Mortes, on the 28th of June, 1607; and that the renegade at once abjured his false faith, and soon after entered a brotherhood at Rome, whose office it was to wait on the sick in hospitals.

This part of Vincent de Paul's life has been told at length because it shows from what the Knights of St. John strove to protect the inhabitants of the coasts. We next find Vincent visiting at a hospital in Paris, where he gave such exceeding comfort to the patients that all with one voice declared him a messenger from heaven.

He afterwards became a tutor in the family of the Count de Joigni, a very excellent man, who was easily led by him to many good works. M. de Joigni was inspector general of the "Galères," or Hulks, the ships in the chief harbours of France, such as Brest and Marseilles, where the convicts, closely chained, were kept to hard labour, and often made to toil at the oar, like the slaves of the Africans. Going the round of these prison-ships, the horrible state of the convicts, their half-naked misery, and still more their fiendish cruelty, went to the heart of the Count and of the Abbé de Paul; and, with full authority from the inspector, the tutor worked among these wretched beings with such good effect that on his doings being represented to the King, Louis XIII., he was made almoner general to the galleys.

While visiting those at Marseilles, he was much struck by the broken-down looks and exceeding sorrowfulness of one of the convicts. He entered into conversation with him, and, after many kind words, persuaded him to tell his troubles. His sorrow was far less for his own condition than for the misery to which his absence must needs reduce his wife and children. And what was Vincent's reply to this? His action was so striking that, though in itself it could hardly be safe to propose it as an example, it must be mentioned as the very height of self-sacrifice.

He absolutely changed places with the convict. Probably some arrangement was made with the immediate jailor of the gang, who, by the exchange of the priest for the convict, could make up his full tale of men to show when his numbers were counted. At any rate the prisoner went free, and returned to his home, whilst Vincent wore a convict's chain, did a convict's work, lived on convict fare, and, what was worse, had only convict society. He was soon sought out and released, but the hurts he had received from the pressure of the chain lasted all his life. He never spoke of this event; it was kept a strict secret; and once when he had referred to it in a letter to a friend, he became so much afraid that the story would become known that he sent to ask for the letter back again. It was, however, not returned, and it makes the fact certain.

The rest of the life of Vincent de Paul would be too lengthy to tell here, though acts of beneficence and self-devotion shine out in glory at each step. The work by which he is chiefly remembered is his establishment of the Order of Sisters of Charity, the excellent women who have for two hundred years been the prime workers in every charitable task in France, nursing the sick, teaching the young, tending deserted children, ever to be found where there is distress or pain.

But of these, and of his charities, we will not here speak, nor even of his influence for good on the King and Queen themselves. The whole tenor of his life was " golden " in one sense, and if we told all his golden deeds they would fill an entire book. So we will only wait to tell how he showed his remembrance of what he had gone through in his African captivity. The redemption of the prisoners there might have seemed his first thought, but that he did so much in other quarters. At different times, with the alms he had collected, and out of the revenues of his benefices, he ransomed no less than twelve hundred slaves from their captivity. At one time the French Consul at Tunis wrote to him that for a certain sum a large number might be set free, and he raised enough to release not only these, but seventy more, and he further wrought upon the King to obtain the consent of the Dey of Tunis that a party of Christian clergy should be permitted to reside in the consul's house, and to minister to the souls and bodies of the Christian slaves, of whom there were six thousand in Tunis alone, besides those in Algiers, Tangier, and Tripoli !

Permission was gained, and a mission of Lazarist brothers arrived. This too was an Order founded by Vincent, consisting of priestly nurses like the Hospitaliers, though not like them warriors. They came in the midst of a dreadful visitation of the plague, and nursed and tended the sick, both Christians and Mahometans, with fearless devotion, day and night, till they won the honour and love of the Moors themselves.

The good Vincent de Paul died in the year 1660, but his brothers of St. Lazarus and sisters of charity still tread in the paths he marked out for them, and his name scarcely needs the saintly epithet that his Church has affixed to it to stand among the most honourable of charitable men.

FATHERS AND SONS

1642–1798

The story of a brave and devoted son lights up the sadness of our civil wars between Cavaliers and Roundheads in the middle of the seventeenth century. It was soon after King Charles had raised his standard at Nottingham, and set forth on his march for London, that it became evident that the Parliamentary army, under the Earl of Essex, intended to intercept his march. The King himself was with the army, with his two boys, Charles and James; but the General-in-Chief was Robert Bertie, Earl of Lindsay, a brave and experienced old soldier, sixty years of age, godson to Queen Elizabeth, and to her two favourite earls, whose Christian names he bore. He had been in her Essex's expedition to Cambridge, and had afterwards served in the Low Countries, under Prince Maurice of Nassau; for the long Continental wars had throughout King James's peaceful reign been treated by the English nobility as schools of arms, and a few campaigns were considered as a graceful finish to a gentleman's education. As soon as Lord Lindsay had begun to fear that the disputes between the King and Parliament must end in war, he had begun to exercise and train his tenantry in Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, of whom he had formed a regiment of infantry. With him was his son Montagu Bertie, Lord Willoughby, a noble-looking man of thirty-two, of whom it was said, that he was as "excellent in reality as others in pretence," and that, thinking "that the cross was an ornament to the crown, and much more to the coronet, he satisfied not himself with the mere exercise of virtue, but sublimated it, and made it grace." He had likewise seen some service against the Spaniards in the Netherlands, and after his return had been made a captain in the Lifeguards, and a Gentleman of the Bedchamber. Lindsay was called General-in-Chief, but the King had imprudently exempted the cavalry from his command, its general, Prince Rupert of the Rhine, taking orders only from himself. Rupert was only three-and-twenty, and his education in the wild school of the Thirty Years' War had not taught him to lay aside his arrogance and opinionativeness; indeed, he had shown great petulance at receiving orders from the King through Lord Falkland.

At eight o'clock, on the morning of the 23rd of October, King Charles was riding along the ridge of Edgehill, and looking down into the Vale of Red Horse, a fair meadow land, here and there broken by hedges and copses. His troops were mustering around him, and in the valley he could see with his telescope the various Parliamentary regiments, as they poured out of the town of Keinton and took up their positions in three lines. "I never saw the rebels in a body before," he said, as he gazed sadly at the subjects arrayed against him. "I shall give them battle. God, and the prayers of good men to Him, assist the justice of my cause." The whole of his forces, about

11,000 in number, were not assembled till two o'clock in the afternoon, for the gentlemen who had become officers found it no easy matter to call their farmers and retainers together, and marshal them into any sort of order; but while one troop after another came trampling, clanking, and shouting in, trying to find and take their proper place, there were hot words round the royal standard.

Lord Lindsay, who was an old comrade of the Earl of Essex, the commander of the rebel forces, knew that he would follow the tactics they had both together studied in Holland, little thinking that one day they should be arrayed against the other in their own native England. He had a high opinion of Essex's generalship, and insisted that the situation of the Royal army required the utmost caution. Rupert, on the other hand, had seen the swift fiery charges of the fierce troopers of the Thirty Years' War, and was backed up by Patrick, Lord Ruthven, one of the many Scots who had won honour under the great Swedish King, Gustavus Adolphus. A sudden charge of the Royal horse would, Rupert argued, sweep the Roundheads from the field, and the foot would have nothing to do but to follow up the victory. The great portrait at Windsor shows us exactly how the King must have stood, with his charger by his side, and his grave, melancholy face, sad enough at having to fight at all with his subjects, and never having seen a battle, entirely bewildered between the ardent words of his spirited nephew and the grave replies of the well-seasoned old Earl. At last, as time went on, and some decision was necessary, the perplexed King, willing at least not to irritate Rupert, desired that Ruthven should array the troops in the Swedish fashion.

It was a greater affront to the General-in-Chief than the King was likely to understand, but it could not shake the old soldier's loyalty. He gravely resigned the empty title of General, which only made confusion worse confounded, and rode away to act as colonel of his own Lincoln regiment, pitying his master's perplexity, and resolved that no private pique should hinder him from doing his duty. His regiment was of foot-soldiers, and was just opposite to the standard of the Earl of Essex.

The church bell was ringing for afternoon service when the Royal forces marched down the hill. The last hurried prayer before the charge was stout old Sir Jacob Astley's, "O Lord, Thou knowest how busy I must be this day; if I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me"; then, rising, he said, "March on, boys." And, amid prayer and exhortation, the other side awaited the shock, as men whom a strong and deeply embittered sense of wrong had roused to take up arms. Prince Rupert's charge was, however, fully successful. No one even waited to cross swords with his troopers, but all the Roundhead horse galloped headlong off the field, hotly pursued by the Royalists. But the main body of the army stood firm, and for some time the battle was nearly equal, until a large troop of the enemy's cavalry who had been kept in reserve, wheeled round and fell upon the Royal forces just when their scanty supply of ammunition was exhausted.

Step by step, however, they retreated bravely, and Rupert, who had returned from his charge, sought in vain to collect his scattered troopers, so as to fall again on the rebels; but some were plundering, some chasing the enemy, and none could be got together. Lord Lindsay was shot through the thigh bone, and fell. He was instantly surrounded by the rebels on horseback; but his son, Lord Willoughby, seeing his danger, flung himself alone among the enemy, and forcing his way forward, raised his father in his arms, thinking of nothing else, and unheeding his own peril. The throng of the enemy around called to him to surrender, and, hastily giving up his sword, he carried the Earl into the nearest shed, and laid him on a heap of straw, vainly striving to staunch his blood. It was a bitterly cold night, and the frosty wind came howling through the darkness. Far above, on the ridge of the hill, the fires of the King's army shone with red light, and some way off on the other side twinkled those of the Parliamentary forces. Glimmering lanterns or torches moved about the battle-field, those of the savage plunderers who crept about to despoil the dead. Whether the battle were won or lost, the father and son knew not, and the guard who watched them knew as little. Lord Lindsay himself murmured, "If it please God I should survive, I never will fight in the same field with boys again!"—no doubt deeming that young Rupert had wrought all the mischief. His thoughts were all on the cause, his son's all on him; and piteous was that night, as the blood continued to flow, and nothing availed to check it, nor was any aid near to restore the old man's ebbing strength.

Towards midnight the Earl's old comrade Essex had time to understand his condition, and sent some officers to inquire for him, and promise speedy surgical attendance. Lindsay was still full of spirit, and spoke to them so strongly of their broken faith, and of the sin of disloyalty and rebellion, that they slunk away one by one out of the hut, and dissuaded Essex from coming himself to see his old friend, as he intended. The surgeon, however, arrived, but too late; Lindsay was already so much exhausted by cold and loss of blood, that he died early in the

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morning of the 24th, all his son's gallant devotion having failed to save him.

The sorrowing son received an affectionate note the next day from the King, full of regret for his father and esteem for himself. Charles made every effort to obtain his exchange, but could not succeed for a whole year. He was afterwards one of the four noblemen who, seven years later, followed the King's white, silent snowy funeral in the dismantled St. George's Chapel; and from first to last he was one of the bravest, purest, and most devoted of those who did honour to the Cavalier cause.

We have another brave son to describe, and for him we must turn away from these sad pages of our history, when we were a house divided against itself, to one of the hours of our brightest glory, when the cause we fought in was the cause of all the oppressed, and nearly alone we upheld the rights of oppressed countries against the invader. And thus it is that the battle of the Nile is one of the exploits to which we look back with the greatest exultation, when we think of the triumph of the British flag.

Let us think of all that was at stake. Napoleon Bonaparte was climbing to power in France, by directing her successful arms against the world. He had beaten Germany and conquered Italy; he had threatened England, and his dream was of the conquest of the East. Like another Alexander, he hoped to subdue Asia, and overthrow the hated British power by depriving it of India. Hitherto, his dreams had become earnest by the force of his marvellous genius, and by the ardour which he breathed into the whole French nation; and when he set sail from Toulon, with 40,000 tried and victorious soldiers and a magnificent fleet, all were filled with vague and unbounded expectations of almost fabulous glories. He swept away as it were the degenerate knights of St. John from their rock of Malta and sailed for Alexandria in Egypt, in the latter end of June, 1798.

His intentions had not become known, and the English Mediterranean fleet was watching the course of this great armament. Sir Horatio Nelson was in pursuit, with the English vessels, and wrote to the First Lord of the Admiralty: "Be they bound to the Antipodes, your lordship may rely that I will not lose a moment in bringing them to action."

Nelson had, however, not ships enough to be detached to reconnoitre, and he actually overpassed the French, whom he guessed to be on the way to Egypt; he arrived at the port of Alexandria on the 28th of June, and saw its blue waters and flat coast lying still in their sunny torpor, as if no enemy were on the seas. Back he went to Syracuse, but could learn no more there; he obtained provisions with some difficulty, and then, in great anxiety, sailed for Greece, where at last, on the 28th of July, he learnt that the French fleet had been seen from Candia, steering to the south-east, about four weeks since. In fact, it had actually passed by him in a thick haze, which concealed each fleet from the other, and had arrived at Alexandria on the 1st of July, three days after he had left it.

Every sail was set for the south, and at four o'clock in the afternoon of the 1st of August a very different sight was seen in Aboukir Bay, so solitary a month ago. It was crowded with shipping. Great castle-like men-of-war rose with all their proud calm dignity out of the water, their dark portholes opening in the white bands on their sides, and the tricoloured flag floating as their ensign. There were thirteen ships of the line and four frigates, and, of these, three were 80-gun ships, and one, towering high above the rest, with her three decks, was *L'Orient*, of 120 guns. Look well at her, for there stands the hero for whose sake we have chosen this and no other of Nelson's glorious fights to place among the setting of our Golden Deeds. There he is, a little *cadet de vaisseau*, as the French call a midshipman, only ten years old, with a heart swelling between awe and exultation at the prospect of his first battle; but, fearless and glad, for is he not the son of the brave Casabianca, the flag-captain? And is not this Admiral Brueys' own ship, looking down in scorn on the fourteen little English ships, not one carrying more than 74 guns, and one only 50?

Why Napoleon had kept the ships there was never known. In his usual mean way of disavowing whatever turned out ill, he laid the blame upon Admiral Brueys; but, though dead men could tell no tales, his papers made it plain that the ships had remained in obedience to commands, though they had not been able to enter the harbour of Alexandria. Large rewards had been offered to any pilot who would take them in, but none could be found who would venture to steer into that port a vessel drawing more than twenty feet of water. They had, therefore, remained at anchor outside, in Aboukir Bay, drawn up in a curve along the deepest of the water, with no room to pass them at either end, so that the commissary of the fleet reported that they could bid defiance to a force more than double their number. The admiral believed that Nelson had not ventured to attack him when they had passed by one another a month before, and when the English fleet was signalled, he still supposed that it was too late in the day for an attack to be made.

Nelson had, however, no sooner learnt that the

French were in sight than he signalled from his ship, the *Vanguard*, that preparations for battle should be made, and in the meantime summoned up his captains to receive his orders during a hurried meal. He explained that, where there was room for a large French ship to swing, there was room for a small English one to anchor, and, therefore, he designed to bring his ships up to the outer part of the French line and station them close below their adversaries; a plan that he said Lord Hood had once designed, though he had not carried it out.

Captain Berry was delighted, and exclaimed, "If we succeed, what will the world say?"

"There is no *if* in the case," returned Nelson, "that we shall succeed is certain. Who may live to tell the tale is a very different question."

And when they rose and parted, he said, "Before this time to-morrow I shall have gained a peerage or Westminster Abbey."

In the fleet went, through a fierce storm of shot and shell from a French battery on an island in advance. Nelson's own ship, the *Vanguard*, was the first to anchor within half-pistol-shot of the third French ship, the *Spartiate*. The *Vanguard* had six colours flying, in case any should be shot away; and such was the fire that was directed on her, that in a few minutes every man at the six guns in her forepart was killed or wounded, and this happened three times. Nelson himself received a wound in the head, which was thought at first to be mortal, but which proved but slight. He would not allow the surgeon to leave the sailors to attend to him till it came to his turn.

Meantime his ships were doing their work gloriously. The *Bellerophon* was, indeed, overpowered by *L'Orient*, 200 of her crew killed, and all her masts

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and cables shot away, so that she drifted away as night came on; but the *Swiftsure* came up in her place, and the *Alexander* and *Leander* both poured in their shot. Admiral Brueys received three wounds, but would not quit his post, and at length a fourth shot almost cut him in two. He desired not to be carried below, but that he might die on deck.

About nine o'clock the ship took fire, and blazed up with fearful brightness, lighting up the whole bay, and showing five French ships with their colours hauled down, the others still fighting on. Nelson himself rose and came on deck when this fearful glow came shining from sea and sky into his cabin; and gave orders that the English boats should immediately be put off for *L'Orient*, to save as many lives as possible.

The English sailors rowed up to the burning ship which they had lately been attacking. The French officers listened to the offer of safety, and called to the little favourite of the ship, the captain's son, to come with them. "No," said the boy; "he was where his father had stationed him, and bidden him not to move save at his call." They told him his father's voice would never call him again, for he lay senseless and mortally wounded on the deck, and that the ship must presently blow up. "No," said the brave child; "he must obey his father." The moment allowed no delay—the boat put off. The flames showed all that passed in a quivering glare more intense than daylight, and the little fellow was then seen on the deck, leaning over the prostrate figure, and presently tying it to one of the spars of the shivered masts.

Just then a thundering explosion shook down to the very hold every ship in the harbour, and burning fragments of *L'Orient* came falling far and wide, plashing heavily into the water, in the dead awful stillness that followed the fearful sound. English boats were plying busily about, picking up those who had leapt overboard in time. Some were dragged in through the lower portholes of the English ships, and about seventy were saved altogether. For one moment a boat's crew had a sight of a helpless figure bound to a spar, and guided by a little childish swimmer, who must have gone overboard with his precious freight just before the explosion. They rowed after the brave little fellow, earnestly desiring to save him; but in darkness, in smoke, in lurid uncertain light, amid hosts of drowning wretches, they lost sight of him again.

> The boy, O where was he?
> Ask of the winds that far around
> With fragments strewed the sea;
> With mast and helm, and pennant fair
> That well had done their part:
> But the noblest thing that perished there
> Was that young faithful heart!

By sunrise the victory was complete. Nay, as Nelson said, "It was not a victory, but a conquest." Only four French ships escaped, and Napoleon and his army were cut off from home. These are the glories of our navy, gained by men with hearts as true and obedient as that of the brave child they had tried in vain to save. Yet still, while giving the full meed of thankful, sympathetic honour to our noble sailors, we cannot but feel that the Golden Deed of Aboukir Bay fell to—

"That young faithful heart."

THE SOLDIERS IN THE SNOW

1672

Few generals have ever been more loved by their soldiers than the great Viscount de Turenne, who was Marshal of France in the time of Louis XIV. Troops are always proud of a leader who wins victories; but Turenne was far more loved for his generous kindness than for his successes. If he gained a battle, he always wrote in his despatches, "*We* succeeded," so as to give the credit to the rest of the army; but if he were defeated he wrote, "*I* lost," so as to take all the blame upon himself. He always shared as much as possible in every hardship suffered by his men, and they trusted him entirely. In the year 1672, Turenne and his army were sent to make war upon the Elector Frederick William of Brandenburg, in Northern Germany. It was in the depth of winter, and the marches through the heavy roads were very trying and wearisome; but the soldiers endured all cheerfully for his sake. Once when they were wading through a deep morass, some of the younger soldiers complained; but the elder ones answered, "Depend upon it, Turenne is more concerned than we are. At this moment he is thinking how to deliver us. He watches for us while we sleep. He is our father. It is plain that you are but young."

Another night, when he was going the round of the camp, he overheard some of the younger men murmuring at the discomforts of the march; when an old soldier, newly recovered from a severe wound, said, "You do not know our father. He would not

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have made us go through such fatigue, unless he had some great end in view, which we cannot yet make out." Turenne always declared that nothing had ever given him more pleasure than this conversation.

There was a severe sickness among the troops, and he went about among the sufferers, comforting them, and seeing that their wants were supplied. When he passed by, the soldiers came out of their tents to look at him, and say, "Our father is in good health: we have nothing to fear."

The army had to enter the principality of Halberstadt, the way to which lay over ridges of high hills with narrow defiles between them. Considerable time was required for the whole of the troops to march through a single narrow outlet; and one very cold day, when such a passage was taking place, the Marshal, quite spent with fatigue, sat down under a bush to wait till all had marched by, and fell asleep. When he awoke, it was snowing fast; but he found himself under a sort of tent made of soldiers' cloaks, hung up upon the branches of trees planted in the ground, and round it were standing, in the cold and snow, all unsheltered, a party of soldiers. Turenne called out to them to ask what they were doing there. "We are taking care of our father," they said; "that is our chief concern." The general, to keep up discipline, seems to have scolded them a little for straggling from their regiment; but he was much affected and gratified by this sight of their hearty love for him.

Still greater and more devoted love was shown by some German soldiers in the terrible winter of 1812. It was when the Emperor Napoleon I. had made his vain attempt to conquer Russia, and had been prevented from spending the winter at Moscow by the great fire that consumed all the city. He was obliged to retreat through the snow, with the Russian army pursuing him, and his miserable troops suffering horrors beyond all imagination. Among them were many Italians, Poles, and Germans, whom he had obliged to become his allies; and the Golden Deed of ten of these German soldiers, the last renmant of those led from Hesse Darmstadt by their gallant young Prince Emilius, is best told in Lord Houghton's verses :—

"From Hessen Darmstadt every step to Moskwa's blazing banks,
Was Prince Emilius found in fight before the foremost ranks;
And when upon the icy waste that host was backward cast,
On Beresina's bloody bridge his banner waved the last.

"His valour shed victorious grace on all that dread retreat—
That path across the 'wildering snow, athwart the blinding sleet;
And every follower of his sword could all endure and dare,
Becoming warriors, strong in hope, or stronger in despair.

"Now, day and dark, along the storm the demon Cossacks sweep—
The hungriest must not look for food, the weariest must not sleep.
No rest but death for horse or man, whichever first shall tire;
They see the flames destroy, but ne'er may feel the saving fire.

"Thus never closed the bitter night, nor rose the savage morn,
But from that gallant company some noble part was shorn;
And, sick at heart, the Prince resolved to keep his purposed way
With steadfast forward looks, nor count the losses of the day.

"At length beside a black, burnt hut, an island of the snow,
Each head in frigid torpor bent towards the saddle bow;
They paused, and of that sturdy troop—that thousand banded men—
At one unmeditating glance he numbered only ten!

"Of all that high triumphant life that left his German home—
Of all those hearts that beat beloved, or looked for love to come—
This piteous remnant, hardly saved, his spirit overcame,
While memory raised each friendly face, recalled an ancient name.

"These were his words, serene and firm, 'Dear brothers, it is best
That here, with perfect trust in Heaven, we give our bodies rest;
If we have borne, like faithful men, our part of toil and pain,
Where'er we wake, for Christ's good sake, we shall not sleep in vain.'

"Some muttered, others looked assent—they had no heart to speak.
Dumb hands were pressed, the pallid lip approached the callous cheek.
They laid them side by side; and death to him at last did seem
To come attired in mazy robe of variegated dream.

"Once more he floated on the breast of old familiar Rhine,
His mother's and one other smile above him seemed to shine;
A blessed dew of healing fell on every aching limb,
Till the stream broadened, and the air thickened, and all was dim.

"Nature has bent to other laws if that tremendous night
Pass'd o'er his frame, exposed and worn, and left no deadly blight;
Then wonder not that when, refresh'd and warm, he woke at last,
There lay a boundless gulf of thought between him and the past.

"Soon raising his astonished head, he found himself alone,
Sheltered beneath a genial heap of vestments not his own;
The light increased, the solemn truth revealing more and more,
The soldiers' corses, self despoiled, closed up the narrow door.

"That very hour, fulfilling good, miraculous succour came,
And Prince Emilius lived to give this worthy deed to fame.
O brave fidelity in death! O strength of loving will!
These are the holy balsam drops that woeful wars distil."

GUNPOWDER PERILS

1700

THE good Chevalier Bayard was wont to mourn over the introduction of firearms, as destructive of chivalry; and certainly the steel-clad knight, with barbed steed, and sword and lance, has disappeared from the battle-field; but his most essential qualities, truth, honour, faithfulness, mercy, and self-devotion have not disappeared with him, nor can they as long as Christian men and women bear in mind that "greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend."

And that terrible compound, gunpowder, has been the occasion of many another daring deed, requiring desperate resolution, to save others at the expense of a death perhaps more frightful to the imagination than any other. Listen to a story of the King's birthday in Jersey over a century ago—in 1804, when that 4th of June that Eton boys delight in was already in the forty-fourth year of its observance in honour of the then reigning monarch, George III.

All the forts in the island had done due honour to the birthday of his Majesty, who was then just recovered from an attack of insanity. In each the guns at noon-day thundered out their royal salute, the flashes had answered one another, and the smoke had wreathed itself away over the blue sea of Jersey. The new fort on the hill just above the town of St. Heliers had contributed its share to the loyal thunders, and then it was shut up, and the keys carried away by Captain Salmon, the artillery officer on guard there, locking up therein 209 barrels of gunpowder, with a large supply of bombshells, and every kind of ammunition such as might well be needed in the Channel Islands the year before Lord Nelson had freed England from the chance of finding the whole French army on our coast in the flat-bottomed boats that were waiting at Boulogne for the dark night that never came.

At six o'clock in the evening Captain Salmon went to dine with the other officers in St. Heliers and to drink the king's health, when the soldiers on guard beheld a cloud of smoke curling out at the air-hole at the end of the magazine. Shouting "Fire," they ran away to avoid an explosion that would have

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shattered them to pieces, and might perhaps endanger the entire town of St. Heliers. Happily their shout was heard by a man of different mould. Lieutenant Lys, the signal officer, was in the watch-house on the hill, and coming out he saw the smoke, and perceived the danger. Two brothers, named Thomas and Edward Touzel, carpenters, and the sons of an old widow, had come up to take down a flag-staff that had been raised in honour of the day, and Mr. Lys ordered them to hasten to the town to inform the commander-in-chief, and get the keys from Captain Salmon.

Thomas went, and endeavoured to persuade his brother to accompany him from the heart of the danger; but Edward replied that he must die some day or other, and that he would do his best to save the magazine, and he tried to stop some of the runaway soldiers to assist. One refused, but another, William Ponteney, of the 3rd, replied that he was ready to die with him, and they shook hands.

Edward Touzel then, by the help of a wooden bar and an axe, broke open the door of the fort, and making his way into it, saw the state of the case, and shouted to Mr. Lys on the outside, "The magazine is on fire, it will blow up, we must lose our lives; but no matter, huzza for the king! We must try and save it." He then rushed into the flame, and seizing the matches, which were almost burnt out (probably splinters of wood tipped with brimstone), he threw them by armfuls to Mr. Lys and the soldier Ponteney, who stood outside and received them. Mr. Lys saw a cask of water near at hand; but there was nothing to carry the water in but an earthen pitcher, his own hat and the soldier's. These, however, they filled again and again, and handed to Touzel, who thus extinguished all the fire he could see; but the smoke was so dense, that he worked in horrible doubt and obscurity, almost suffocated, and with his face and hands already scorched. The beams over his head were on fire, large cases containing powder horns had already caught, and an open barrel of gunpowder was close by, only awaiting the fall of a single brand to burst into a fatal explosion. Touzel called out to entreat for some drink to enable him to endure the stifling, and Mr. Lys handed him some spirits-and-water, which he drank, and worked on; but by this time the officers had heard the alarm, dispelled the panic among the soldiers, and come to the rescue. The magazine was completely emptied, and the last smouldering sparks extinguished; but the whole of the garrison and citizens felt that they owed their lives to the three gallant men to whose exertions alone, under Providence, it was owing that succour did not come too late. Most of all was honour due to Edward Touzel, who, as a civilian, might have turned his back upon the peril without any blame; nay, could even have pleaded Mr. Lys' message as a duty, but who had instead rushed foremost into what he believed was certain death.

A meeting was held in the church of St. Heliers to consider of a testimonial of gratitude to these three brave men (it is to be hoped that thankfulness to an overruling Providence was also manifested there), when 500*l.* was voted to Mr. Lys, who was the father of a large family; 300*l.* to Edward Touzel; and William Ponteney received, at his own request, a life annuity of 20*l.* and a gold medal, as he declared that he had rather continue to serve the king as a soldier than be placed in any other course of life.

In that same year (1804) the same daring endurance and heroism were evinced by the officers of H.M.S. *Hindostan*, where, when on the way from Gibraltar to join Nelson's fleet at Toulon, the cry of "Fire!" was heard, and dense smoke rose from the lower decks, so as to render it nearly impossible to detect the situation of the fire. Again and again Lieutenants Tailour and Banks descended, and fell down senseless from the stifling smoke; they were carried on deck, recovered in the free air, and returned to the vain endeavour of clearing the powder-room. But no man could long preserve his faculties in the poisonous atmosphere, and the two lieutenants might be said to have died many deaths from it. At last the fire gained so much head, that it was impossible to save the vessel, which had in the meantime been brought into the Bay of Rosas, and was near enough to land to enable the crew to escape in boats, after having endured the fire six hours. Nelson himself wrote: "The preservation of the crew seems little short of a miracle. I never read such a journal of exertions in my life."

Eight years after, on the taking of Ciudad Rodrigo, in 1813, by the British army under Wellington, Captain William Jones, of the 52nd Regiment, having captured a French officer, employed his prisoner in pointing out quarters for his men. The Frenchman could not speak English, and Captain Jones—a fiery Welshman, whom it was the fashion in the regiment to term "Jack Jones"—knew no French; but dumb show supplied the want of language, and some of the company were lodged in a large store pointed out by the Frenchman, who then led the way to a church, near which Lord Wellington and his staff were standing. But no sooner had the guide stepped into the building than he started back, crying, "Sacré bleu!" and ran out in the utmost alarm. The Welsh captain, however, went on, and perceived that the church had been used as a powder-mazagine by the French;

barrels were standing round, samples of their contents lay loosely scattered on the pavement, and in the midst was a fire, probably lighted by some Portuguese soldiers. Forthwith, Captain Jones and the sergeant entered the church, took up the burning embers brand by brand, bore them safe over the scattered powder, and out of the church, and thus averted what might have been the most terrific disaster that could have befallen our army.

Our next story of this kind relates to a French officer, Monsieur Mathieu Martinel, adjutant of the 1st Cuirassiers. In 1820 there was a fire in the barracks at Strasburg, and nine soldiers were lying sick and helpless above a room containing a barrel of gunpowder and a thousand cartridges. Every one was escaping, but Martinel persuaded a few men to return into the barracks with him, and hurried up the stairs through smoke and flame that turned back his companions. He came alone to the door of a room close to that which contained the powder, but found it locked. Catching up a bench, he beat the door in, and was met by such a burst of fire as had almost driven him away; but, just as he was about to descend, he thought that, when the flames reached the powder, the nine sick men must infallibly be blown up, and returning to the charge, he dashed forward, with eyes shut through the midst, and with face, hands, hair, and clothes singed and burnt, he made his way to the magazine, in time to tear away, and throw to a distance from the powder, the mass of paper in which the cartridges were packed, which was just about to ignite, and appearing at the window, with loud shouts for water, thus showed the possibility of penetrating to the magazine, and floods of water were at once directed to it, so as to drench the powder and thus save the men.

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This same Martinel had shortly before thrown himself into the river Ill, without waiting to undress, to rescue a soldier who had fallen in, so near a water-mill, that there was hardly a chance of life for either. Swimming straight towards the mill-dam, Martinel grasped the post of the sluice with one arm, and with the other tried to arrest the course of the drowning man, who was borne by a rapid current towards the mill-wheel; and was already so far beneath the surface that Martinel could not reach him without letting go of the post. Grasping the inanimate body, he actually allowed himself to be carried under the mill-wheel, without loosing his hold, and came up immediately after on the other side, still able to bring the man to land, in time for his suspended animation to be restored.

Seventeen years afterwards, when the regiment was at Paris, there was, on the night of the 14th of June, 1837, during the illuminations at the wedding festival of the Duke and Duchess of Orleans, one of those frightful crushes that sometimes occur in an ill-regulated crowd, when there is some obstruction in the way, and there is nothing but a horrible blind struggling and trampling, violent and fatal because of its very helplessness and bewilderment. The crowd were trying to leave the Champ de Mars, where great numbers had been witnessing some magnificent fireworks, and had blocked up the passage leading out by the Military College. A woman fell down in a fainting fit, others stumbled over her, and thus formed an obstruction, which, being unknown to those in the rear, did not prevent them from forcing forward the persons in front, so that they too were pushed and trodden down into one frightful, struggling, suffocating mass of living and dying men, women, and children, increasing every moment.

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M. Martinel was passing, on his way to his quarters, when, hearing the tumult, he ran to the gate from the other side, and meeting the crowd tried by shouts and entreaties to persuade them to give back, but the hindmost could not hear him, and the more frightened they grew, the more they tried to hurry home, and so made the heap worse and worse, and in the midst an illuminated yew-tree, in a pot, was upset, and further barred the way. Martinel, with imminent danger to himself, dragged out one or two persons; but finding his single efforts almost useless among such numbers, he ran to the barracks, sounded to horse, and without waiting till his men could be got together, hurried off again on foot, with a few of his comrades, and dashed back into the crowd, struggling as vehemently to penetrate to the scene of danger, as many would have done to get away from it.

Private Spenlée alone kept with him, and, coming to the dreadful heap, these two laboured to free the passage, lift up the living, and remove the dead. First he dragged out an old man in a fainting fit, then a young soldier, next a boy, a woman, a little girl—he carried them to freer air, and came back the next moment, though often so nearly pulled down by the frantic struggles of the terrified stifled creatures that he was each moment in the utmost peril of being trampled to death. He carried out nine persons one by one; Spenlée brought out a man and a child; and his brother officers, coming up, took their share. One lieutenant, with a girl in a swoon in his arms, caused a boy to be put on his back, and under this double burthen was pushing against the crowd for half an hour, till at length he fell and was all but killed.

A troop of Cuirassiers had by this time mounted, and through the Champ de Mars came slowly along, step by step, their horses moving as gently and cautiously as if they knew their work. Everywhere, as they advanced, little children were held up to them out of the throng to be saved, and many of their chargers were loaded with the little creatures, perched before and behind the kind soldier. With wonderful patience and forbearance, they managed to insert themselves and their horses, first in single file, then two by two, then more abreast, like a wedge, into the press, until at last they formed a wall, cutting off the crowd behind from the mass in the gateway, and thus preventing the encumbrance from increasing. The people came to their senses, and went off to other gates, and the crowd diminishing, it became possible to lift up the many unhappy creatures, who lay stifling or crushed in the heap. They were carried into the barracks, the Cuirassiers hurried to bring their mattresses to lay them on in the hall, brought them water, linen, all they could want, and were as tender to them as sisters of charity, till they were taken to the hospitals or to their homes. Martinel, who was the moving spirit in this gallant rescue, received in the following year one of M. Monthyon's prizes for the greatest acts of virtue that could be brought to light.

Nor among the gallant actions of which powder has been the cause should be omitted that of Lieutenant Willoughby, who, in the first dismay of the mutiny in India, in 1858, blew up the great magazine at Delhi, with all the ammunition that would have armed the Sepoys even yet more terribly against ourselves. That Golden Deed was one of those capable of no earthly meed, for it carried the brave young officer where alone there is true reward; and all the Queen and country could do in his honour was to pension his widowed mother, and lay up his name among those that stir the heart with admiration and gratitude.

HEROES OF THE PLAGUE

1576—1665—1721

When our Litany entreats that we may be delivered from "plague, pestilence and famine," the first of these words bears a special meaning, which came home with strong and painful force to European minds at the time the Prayer-book was translated, and for the whole following century.

It refers to the deadly sickness emphatically called "the plague," a typhoid fever exceedingly violent and rapid, and accompanied with a frightful swelling of the limbs. The East is the usual haunt of this fatal complaint, which some suppose to be bred by the marshy, unwholesome state of Egypt after the subsidence of the waters of the Nile, and which generally prevails in Egypt and Syria until its course is checked either by the cold of winter or the heat in summer. At times this disease has become unusually malignant and infectious, and then has come beyond its usual boundaries, and made its way over all the West. These dreadful visitations were rendered more frequent by total disregard of all precautions, and ignorance of laws for preserving health. People crowded together in towns without means of obtaining sufficient air or cleanliness, and thus were sure to be unhealthy; and whenever war or famine had occasioned more than usual poverty, some frightful epidemic was sure to follow in its train, and sweep away the poor creatures whose frames were already weakened by previous privation. And often this "sore judgment" was that emphatically called the plague; especially during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a time when war had become far more cruel and mischievous in the hands of hired regiments than ever it had been with a feudal army, and when at the same time increasing trade was filling the cities with more closely packed inhabitants, within fortifications that would not allow the city to expand in proportion to its needs. It has been only the establishment of the system of quarantine which has succeeded in cutting off the course of infection by which the plague was wont to set out on its frightful travels from land to land, from city to city.

Such visitations as these proved whether the pastors of the afflicted flock were shepherds or hirelings. So felt, in 1576, Cardinal Carlo Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, the worthiest of all the successors of St. Ambrose, when he learnt at Lodi that the plague had made its appearance in his city, where, remarkably enough, there had lately been such licentious revelry that he had solemnly warned the people that, unless they repented, they would certainly bring on themselves the wrath of Heaven. His council of clergy advised him to remain in some healthy part of his diocese till the sickness should have spent itself, but he replied that a Bishop, whose duty it is to give his life for his sheep, could not rightly abandon them in time of peril. They owned that to stand by them was the higher course. "Well," he said, "is it not a Bishop's duty to choose the higher course?"

So back into the town of deadly sickness he went, leading the people to repent, and watching over them in their sufferings, visiting the hospitals, and, by his own example, encouraging his clergy in carrying spiritual consolation to the dying. All the time the plague lasted, which was four months, his exertions were fearless and unwearied, and what was remarkable was, that of his whole household only two died, and they were persons who had not been called to go about among the sick. Indeed, some of the rich who had repaired to a villa, where they spent their time in feasting and amusement in the luxurious Italian fashion, were there followed by the pestilence, and all perished; their dainty fare and the excess in which they indulged having no doubt been as bad a preparation as the poverty of the starving people in the city.

The strict and regular life of the Cardinal and his clergy, and their home in the spacious palace, were, no doubt, under Providence, a preservative; but, in the opinions of the time, there was little short of a miracle in the safety of one who daily preached in the cathedral,—bent over the beds of the sick, giving them food and medicine, hearing their confessions, and administering the last rites of the Church,—and then braving the contagion after death, rather than let the corpses go forth unblest to their common grave. Nay, so far was he from seeking to save his own life, that, kneeling before the altar in the cathedral, he solemnly offered himself, like Moses, as a sacrifice for his people. But, like Moses, the sacrifice was passed by, and Borromeo remained untouched, as did the twenty-eight priests who voluntarily offered themselves to join in his labours.

No wonder that the chief memories that haunt the glorious white marble cathedral of Milan are those of St. Ambrose, who taught mercy to an

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emperor, and of St. Carlo Borromeo, who practised mercy on a people.

It was a hundred years later that the greatest and last visitation of the plague took place in London. Doubtless, the scourge called forth—as in Christian lands such judgments always do—many an act of true and blessed self-devotion; but these are not recorded, save where they have their reward: and the tale now to be told is of one of the small villages to which the infection spread—namely, Eyam, in Derbyshire.

This is a lovely place between Buxton and Chatsworth, perched high on a hill-side, and shut in by another higher mountain—extremely beautiful, but exactly one of those that, for want of free air, always become the especial prey of infection. At that time lead works were in operation in the mountains, and the village was thickly inhabited. Great was the dismay of the villagers when the family of a tailor, who had received some patterns of cloth from London, showed symptoms of the plague in its most virulent form, sickening and dying in one day.

The Rector of the parish, the Rev. William Mompesson, was still a young man, and had been married only a few years. His wife, a beautiful young woman, only twenty-seven years old, was exceedingly terrified at the tidings from the village, and wept bitterly as she implored her husband to take her, and her little George and Elizabeth, who were three and four years old, away to some place of safety. But Mr. Mompesson gravely showed her that it was his duty not to forsake his flock in their hour of need, and began at once to make arrangements for sending her and the children away. She saw he was right in remaining, and ceased to urge him to forsake his charge: but she insisted that, if he ought not to desert his flock, his wife ought not to leave him; and she wept and entreated so earnestly, that he at length consented that she should be with him, and that only the two little ones should be removed while yet there was time.

Their father and mother parted with the little ones as treasures that they might never see again. At the same time Mr. Mompesson wrote to London for the most approved medicines and prescriptions; and he likewise sent a letter to the Earl of Devonshire, at Chatsworth, to engage that his parishioners should exclude themselves from the whole neighbourhood, and thus confine the contagion within their own boundaries, provided the Earl would undertake that food, medicines, and other necessaries, should be placed at certain appointed spots, at regular times, upon the hills around, where the Eyamites might come, leave payment for them, and take them up, without holding any communication with the bringers, except by letters, which could be placed on a stone, and then fumigated, or passed through vinegar, before they were touched by the hand. To this the Earl consented, and for seven whole months the engagement was kept.

Mr. Mompesson represented to his people that, with the plague once among them, it would be so unlikely that they should not carry infection about with them, that it would be selfish cruelty to other places to try to escape amongst them, and thus spread the danger. So rocky and wild was the ground around them, that, had they striven to escape, a regiment of soldiers could not have prevented them. But of their own free will they attended to their Rector's remonstrance, and it was not known that one parishioner of Eyam passed the boundary all that time, nor was there a single case of plague in any of the villages around.

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The assembling of large congregations in churches had been thought to increase the infection in London, and Mr. Mompesson, therefore, thought it best to hold his services out-of-doors. In the middle of the village is a dell, suddenly making a cleft in the mountain-side, only five yards wide at the bottom, which is the pebbly bed of a wintry torrent, but is dry in the summer. On the side towards the village, the slope upwards was of soft green turf, scattered with hazel, rowan, and alder bushes, and full of singing birds. On the other side, the ascent was nearly perpendicular, and composed of sharp rocks, partly adorned with bushes and ivy, and here and there rising up in fantastic peaks and archways, through which the sky could be seen from below. One of these rocks was hollow, and could be entered from above—a natural gallery, leading to an archway opening over the precipice; and this Mr. Mompesson chose for his reading-desk and pulpit. The dell was so narrow, that his voice could clearly be heard across it, and his congregation arranged themselves upon the green slope opposite, seated or kneeling upon the grass.

On Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays arose the earnest voice of prayer from that rocky glen, the people's response meeting the pastor's voice; and twice on Sundays he preached to them the words of life and hope. It was a dry hot summer; fain would they have seen thunder and rain to drive away their enemy; and seldom did weather break in on the regularity of these services. But there was another service that the Rector had daily to perform; not in his churchyard—that would have perpetuated the infection—but on a healthy hill above the village. There he daily read of "the Resurrection and the Life," and week by week the company on the grassy

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slope grew fewer and scantier. His congregation were passing from the dell to the heathy mound.

Day and night the Rector and his wife were among the sick, nursing, feeding, and tending them with all that care and skill could do; but, in spite of all their endeavours, only a fifth part of the whole of the inhabitants lived to spend the last Sunday in Cucklet Church, as the dell is still called. Mrs. Mompesson had persuaded her husband to have a wound made in his leg, fancying that this would lessen the danger of infection, and he yielded in order to satisfy her. His health endured perfectly, but she began to waste under her constant exertions, and her husband feared that he saw symptoms of consumption; but she was full of delight at some appearances in his wound that made her imagine that it had carried off the disease, and that his danger was over.

A few days after, she sickened with symptoms of the plague, and her frame was so weakened that she sank very quickly. She was often delirious; but when she was too much exhausted to endure the exertion of taking cordials, her husband entreated her to try for their children's sake, she lifted herself up and made the endeavour. She lay peacefully, saying, "she was but looking for the good hour to come," and calmly died, making the responses to her husband's prayers even to the last. Her he buried in the churchyard, and fenced the grave in afterwards with iron rails. There are two beautiful letters from him written on her death—one to his little children, to be kept and read when they would be old enough to understand it; the other to his patron, Sir George Saville, afterwards Lord Halifax. "My drooping spirits," he says, "are much refreshed with her joys, which I assure myself are unutterable."

He wrote both these letters in the belief that he should soon follow her, speaking of himself to Sir George as "his dying chaplain," commending to him his "distressed orphans," and begging that a "humble pious man" might be chosen to succeed him in his parsonage. "Sir, I thank God that I am willing to shake hands in peace with all the world; and I have comfortable assurances that He will accept me for the sake of His Son; and I find God more good than ever I imagined, and wish that His goodness were not so much abused and contemned," writes the widowed pastor, left alone among his dying flock. And he concludes, "and with tears I entreat that when you are praying for fatherless and motherless infants, you would then remember my two pretty babes."

These two letters were written on the last day of August and the first of September, 1666; but on the 20th of November, Mr. Mompesson was writing to his uncle, in the lull after the storm: "The condition of this place hath been so dreadful, that I persuade myself it exceedeth all history and example. I may truly say our town has become a Golgotha, a place of skulls; and had there not been a small remnant of us left, we had been as Sodom, and like unto Gomorrah. My ears never heard such doleful lamentations, my nose never smelt such noisome smells, and my eyes never beheld such ghastly spectacles. Here have been seventy-six families visited within my parish, out of which died 259 persons."

However, since the 11th of October there had been no fresh cases, and he was now burning all woollen clothes, lest the infection should linger in them. He himself had never been touched by the complaint, nor had his maid-servant; his man had had it but slightly. Mr. Mompesson lived many more years,

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was offered the Deanery of Lincoln, but did not accept it, and died in 1708.

The last of these remarkable visitations of the plague, properly so called, was at Marseilles, in 1721. It was supposed to have been brought by a vessel which sailed from Seyde, in the Bay of Tunis, on the 31st of January, 1720, which had a clean bill of health when it anchored off the Château d'If, at Marseilles, on the 25th of May; but six of the crew were found to have died on the voyage, and the persons who handled the freight also died, though, it was said, without any symptoms of the plague, and the first cases were supposed to be of the fevers caused by excessive poverty and crowding. The unmistakable Oriental plague, however, soon began to spread in the city among the poorer population, and in truth the wars and heavy expenses of Louis XIV. had made poverty in France more wretched than ever before, and the whole country was like one deadly sore, festering, and by and by to come to a fearful crisis. Precautions were taken, the infected families were removed to the infirmaries and their houses walled up, but all this was done at night in order not to excite alarm. The mystery, however, made things more terrible to the imagination, and this was a period of the utmost selfishness. All the richer inhabitants who had the means of quitting the city, and who were the very people who could have been useful there, fled with one accord. Suddenly the lazzaretto was left without superintendents, the hospitals without stewards; the judges, public officers, notaries, and most of the superior workmen in the most necessary trades were all gone. Only the Provost and four municipal officers remained, with 1,100 livres in their treasury, in the midst of an entirely disorganized city, and an enormous popula-

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tion without work, without restraint, without food, and a prey to the deadliest of diseases.

Horrible crimes were committed. Malefactors were released from the prisons and convicts from the galleys, and employed for large payment to collect the corpses and carry the sick to the infirmaries. Of course, they could only be wrought up to such work by intoxication and unlimited opportunities of plunder, and their rude treatment both of the dead and of the living sufferers added unspeakably to the general wretchedness. To be carried to the infirmary was certain death,—no one lived in that heap of contagion; and even this shelter was not always to be had,—some of the streets were full of dying creatures who had been turned out of their houses and could crawl no farther.

What was done to alleviate all these horrors? It was in the minority of Louis XV. and the Regent Duke of Orleans, easy, good-natured man that he was, sent 22,000 marks to the relief of the city, all in silver, for paper money was found to spread the infection more than anything else. He also sent a great quantity of corn, and likewise doctors for the sick, and troops to shut in the infected district. The Pope, Clement XI. sent spiritual blessings to the sufferers, and, moreover, three ship-loads of wheat. The Regent's Prime Minister, the Abbé Dubois, the shame of his Church and country, fancied that to send these supplies cast a slight upon his administration, and desired his representative at Rome to prevent the sailing of the ships, but his orders were not for very shame carried out, and the vessels set out. On their way they were seized by a Moorish corsair, who was more merciful than Dubois, for he no sooner learnt their destination than he let them go unplundered.

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And in the midst of the misery there were bright lights "running to and fro among the stubble." The Provost and his five remaining officers, and a gentleman called Le Chevalier Rose, did their utmost in the bravest and most unselfish way to help the sufferers, distribute food, provide shelter, restrain the horrors perpetrated by the sick in their ravings, and provide for the burial of the dead. And the clergy were all devoted to the task of mercy. There was only one convent, that of St. Victor, where the gates were closed against all comers in the hope of shutting out infection. Every other monastic establishment freely devoted itself. It was a time when party spirit ran high. The Bishop, Henri François Xavier de Belzunce, a nephew of the Duke de Lauzun, was a strong and rigid Jesuit, and had joined so hotly in the persecution of the Jansenists that he had forbidden the brotherhood called Oratorian fathers to hear confessions, because he suspected them of a leaning to Jansenist opinions; but he and they both alike worked earnestly in the one cause of mercy. They were content to obey his prejudiced edict, since he was in lawful authority, and threw themselves heartily into the lower and more disdained services to the sick, as nurses and tenders of the body alone, not of the soul, and in this work their whole community, Superior and all, perished, almost without exception. Perhaps these men, thus laying aside hurt feeling and sense of injustice, were the greatest conquerors of all whose Golden Deeds we have described.

Bishop Belzunce himself, however, stands as the prominent figure in the memory of those dreadful five months. He was a man of commanding stature, towering above all around him, and his fervent sermons, aided by his example of severe and strict piety, and his great charities, had greatly impressed the people. He now went about among the plague-stricken, attending to their wants, both spiritual and temporal, and sold or mortgaged all his property to obtain relief for them, and he actually went himself in the tumbrils of corpses to give them the rites of Christian burial. His doings closely resembled those of Cardinal Borromeo, and like him he had recourse to constant preachings of repentance, processions, and assemblies for litanies in the Church. It is curiously characteristic that it was the English clergyman, who equally pious, and sensible that only the Almighty could remove the scourge, yet deemed it right to take precautions against the effects of bringing a large number of persons into one building. How Belzunce's clergy seconded him may be gathered from the numbers who died of the disease. Besides the Oratorians, there died eighteen Jesuits, twenty-six of the order called Recollets, and forty-three Capuchins, all of whom had freely given their lives in the endeavour to alleviate the general suffering. In the four chief towns of Provence 80,000 died, and about 8,000 in the lesser places. The winter finally checked the destroyer, and then, sad to say, it appeared how little effect the warning had had on the survivors. Inheritances had fallen together into the hands of persons who found themselves rich beyond their expectations, and in the glee of having escaped the danger, forgot to be thankful, and spent their wealth in revelry. Never had the cities of Provence been so full of wild, questionable mirth as during the ensuing winter, and it was remarked that the places which had suffered most severely were the most given up to thoughtless gaiety, and even licentiousness.

Good Bishop Belzunce did his best to protest against the wickedness around him, and refused to leave his flock at Marseilles, when, four years after, a far more distinguished see was offered to him. He died in 1755, in time to escape the sight of the retribution that was soon worked out on the folly and vice of the unhappy country.

THE SECOND OF SEPTEMBER

1792

THE oppression and injustice that had for generations past been worked out in France ended in the most fearful reaction that history records, and the horrors that took place in the Revolution pass all thought or description. Every institution that had been misused was overthrown at one fell swoop, and the whole accumulated vengeance of generations fell on the heads of the persons who occupied the positions of the former oppressors. Many of these were as pure and guiltless as their slaughterers were the reverse, but the heads of the Revolution imagined that to obtain their ideal vision of perfect justice and liberty, all the remnants of the former state of things must be swept away, and the ferocious beings who carried out their decrees had become absolutely frantic with delight in bloodshed. The nation seemed delivered up to a delirium of murder. But as

> " Even as earth's wild war cries heighten,
> The cross upon the brow will brighten,"

these times of surpassing horror were also times of surpassing devotion and heroism. Without attempting to describe the various stages of the Revolution, and the different committees that under different titles carried on the work of destruction, we will mention some of the deeds that shine out as we look into that abyss of horror, the Paris of 1792 and the following years.

Think of the Swiss Guards, who on the 10th of August, 1792, the miserable day when the King, Queen, and children were made the captives of the people, stood resolutely at their posts, till they were massacred almost to a man. Well is their fidelity honoured by the noble sculpture near Lucerne, cut out in the living rock of their own Alps, and representing a lion dying to defend the fleur-de-lis.

A more dreadful day still was in preparation. The mob seemed to have imagined that the King and nobility had some strange dreadful power, and that unless they were all annihilated they would rise up and trample all down before them, and those who had the direction of affairs profited by this delusion to multiply executioners, and clear away all that they supposed to stand in the way of the renewal of the nation. And the attempts of the emigrant nobility and of the German princes to march to the rescue of the royal family added to the fury of their cowardly ferocity. The prisons of Paris were crowded to overflowing with aristocrats, as it was the fashion to call the nobles and gentry, and with the clergy who had refused their adhesion to the new state of things. The whole number is reckoned at not less than 8,000.

Among those at the Abbaye de St. Germain were M. Jaques Cazotte, an old gentleman of seventy-three, who had been for many years in a government office, and had written various poems. He was living in the country, in Champagne, when on the 18th of

August he was arrested. His daughter Elizabeth, a lovely girl of twenty, would not leave him, and together they were taken first to Epernay and then to Paris, where they were thrown into the Abbaye, and found it crowded with prisoners. M. Cazotte's bald forehead and grey locks gave him a patriarchal appearance, and his talk, deeply and truly pious, was full of Scripture language, as he strove to persuade his fellow-captives to own the true blessings of suffering.

Here Elizabeth met the like-minded Marie de Sombreuil, who had clung to her father, Charles Viscount de Sombreuil, the Governor of the Invalides, or pensioners of the French army; and here, too, had Madame de Fausse Lendry come with her old uncle the Abbé de Rastignac, who had been for three months extremely ill, and was only just recovering when dragged to the prison, and there placed in a room so crowded that it was not possible to turn round, and the air in the end of August was fearfully close and heated. Not once while there was the poor old man able to sleep. His niece spent the nights in a room belonging to the jailer, with the Princess de Tarente, and Mademoiselle de Sombreuil.

On the 2nd of September these slaughter-houses were as full as they could hold, and about a hundred ruffians armed with axes and guns were sent round to all the jails to do the terrible work. It was a Sunday, and some of the victims had tried to observe it religiously, though little divining that it was to be their last. They first took alarm on perceiving that their jailer had removed his family, and then that he sent up their dinner earlier than usual, and removed all the knives and forks. By and by howls and shouts were heard, and the tocsin was heard ringing, alarm guns firing, and reports came in to the prisoners of Abbaye that the populace were breaking into the prisons.

The clergy were all penned up together in the cloisters of the Abbaye, whither they had been brought in carriages that morning. Among them was the Abbé Sicard, an admirable priest who had spent his whole life-time in instructing the deaf and dumb in his own house, where—

> "The cunning finger finely twined
> The subtle thread that knitteth mind to mind;
> There that strange bridge of signs was built where roll
> The sunless waves that sever soul from soul,
> And by the arch, no bigger than a hand,
> Truth travell'd over to the silent land."

He had been arrested, while teaching his pupils, on the 26th of August, 1792, and shut up among other clergy in the prison of the Mayoralty; but the lads whom he had educated came in a body to ask leave to claim him at the bar of the National Assembly. Massieu, his best scholar, had drawn up a most touching address, saying, that in him the deaf and dumb were deprived of their teacher, nurse, and father. "It is he who has taught us what we know, without him we should be as the beasts of the field." This petition, and the gestures of the poor silent beings, went to the heart of the National Assembly. One young man, named Duhamel, neither deaf nor dumb, from pure admiration of the good work, went and offered to be imprisoned in the Abbé's place. There was great applause, and a decree was passed that the cause of the arrest should be inquired into, but this took no effect, and on that dreadful afternoon, M. Sicard was put into one of a procession of carriages, which drove slowly through the streets full of priests, who were reviled, pelted, and wounded by the populace till they reached the Abbaye.

In the turnkey's rooms sat a horrible committee, who acted as a sort of tribunal, but very few of the priests reached it. They were for the most part cut down as they stepped out into the throng in the court—consisting of red-capped ruffians, with their shirt sleeves turned up, and still more fiendish women, who hounded them on to the butchery, and brought them wine and food. Sicard and another priest contrived, while their companions fell, to rush into the committee-room, exclaiming, "Messieurs, preserve an unfortunate!"

"Go along," they said; "do you wish us to get ourselves massacred?"

But one, recognising him, was surprised, knowing that his life was to be spared, and took him into the room, promising to save him as long as possible. Here the two priests would have been safe but for a wretched woman, who shrieked out to the murderers that they had been admitted, and loud knocks and demands for them came from without. Sicard thought all lost, and taking out his watch, begged one of the committee to give it to the first deaf mute who should come and ask for him, sure that it would be the faithful Massieu. At first the man replied that the danger was not imminent enough; but on hearing a more furious noise at the door, as if the mob were going to break in, he took the watch; and Sicard falling on his knees, commended his soul to God, and embraced his brother priest.

In rushed the assassins, they paused for a moment, unable to distinguish the priests from the committee, but the two pikemen found them out, and his companion was instantly murdered. The weapons were lifted against Sicard, when a man pushed through the crowd, and throwing himself before the pike, displayed his breast, and cried, "Behold the bosom through which you must pass to reach that of this good citizen. You do not know him. He is the Abbé Sicard, one of the most benevolent of men, the most useful to his country, the father of the deaf and dumb!"

The murderer dropped his pike; but Sicard perceiving that it was the populace who were the real dispensers of life or death, sprang to the window, and shouted, "Friends, behold an innocent man. Am I to die without being heard?"

"You were among the rest," the mob shouted; "therefore you are as bad as the others."

But when he told his name, the cry changed. "He is the father of the deaf and dumb! he is too useful to perish; his life is spent in doing good; he must be saved." And the murderers behind took him up in their arms, and carried him out into the court, where he was obliged to submit to be embraced by the whole gang of ruffians, who wanted to carry him home in triumph; but he did not choose to go without being legally released, and returning into the committee-room, he learnt for the first time the name of his preserver, one Monnot, a watchmaker, who, though knowing him only by character, and learning that he was among the clergy who were being driven to the slaughter, had rushed in to save him.

Sicard remained in the committee-room while further horrors were perpetrated all round, and at night was taken to the little room called Le Violon, with two other prisoners. A horrible night ensued; the murders on the outside varied with drinking and dancing; and at three o'clock the murderers tried to break into Le Violon. There was a loft far overhead, and the other two prisoners tried to persuade Sicard to climb on their shoulders to reach it, saying that his life was more useful than theirs. However, some fresh prey was brought in, which drew off the attention of the murderers, and two days afterwards Sicard was released to resume his life of charity.

At the beginning of the night, all the ladies who had accompanied their relatives were separated from them, and put into the women's room ; but when morning came they entreated earnestly to return to them, but Mademoiselle de Fausse Lendry was assured that her uncle was safe, and they were told soon after that all who remained were pardoned. About twenty-two ladies were together, and were called to leave the prison, but the two who went first were at once butchered, and the sentry called out to the others, "It is a snare, go back, do not show yourselves." They retreated ; but Marie de Sombreuil had made her way to her father, and when he was called down into the court, she came with him. She hung round him, beseeching the murderers to have pity on his grey hairs, and declaring that they must strike him only through her. One of the ruffians, touched by her resolution, called out that they should be allowed to pass if the girl would drink to the health of the nation. The whole court was swimming with blood, and the glass he held out to her was full of something red. Marie would not shudder. She drank, and with the applause of the assassins ringing in her ears, she passed with her father over the threshold of the fatal gates, into such freedom and safety as Paris could then afford. Never again could she see a glass of red wine without a shudder, and it was generally believed that it was actually a glass of blood that she had swallowed, though she always averred that this was an exaggeration, and that it had been only her impression before tasting it that so horrible a draught was offered to her.

The tidings that Mademoiselle de Sombreuil had saved her father came to encourage the rest of the ladies, and when calls were heard for "Cazotte," Elizabeth flew out and joined her father, and in like manner stood between him and the butchers, till her devotion made the crowd cry "Pardon!" and one of the men employed about the prison opened a passage for her, by which she, too, led her father away.

Madame de Fausse Lendry was not so happy. Her uncle was killed early in the day, before she was aware that he had been sent for, but she survived to relate the history of that most horrible night and day. The same work was going on at all the other prisons, and chief among the victims of La Force was the beautiful Marie Louise of Savoy, the Princess de Lamballe, and one of the most intimate friends of the Queen. A young widow without children, she had been the ornament of the court, and clever learned ladies thought her frivolous, but the depth of her nature was shown in the time of trial. Her old father-in-law had taken her abroad with him when the danger first became apparent, but as soon as she saw that the Queen herself was aimed at, she went immediately back to France to comfort her and share her fate.

Since the terrible 10th of August, the friends had been separated, and Madame de Lamballe had been in the prison of La Force. There, on the evening of the 2nd of September, she was brought down to the tribunal, and told to swear liberty, equality, and hatred to the king and queen.

"I will readily swear the two former. I cannot swear the latter. It is not in my heart."

"Swear! If not, you are dead."

She raised her eyes, lifted her hands, and made a step to the door. Murderers closed her in, and pike thrusts in a few moments were the last "stage that carried from earth to heaven" the gentle woman, who had loved her queenly friend to the death. Little mattered it to her that her corpse was soon torn limb from limb, and that her fair ringlets were floating round the pike on which her head was borne past her friend's prison window. Little matters it now even to Marie Antoinette. The worst that the murderers could do for such as these, could only work for them a more exceeding weight of glory.

M. Cazotte was imprisoned again on the 12th of September, and all his daughter's efforts failed to save him. She was taken from him, and he died on the guillotine, exclaiming, "I die as I have lived, faithful to my God and to my King." And the same winter, M. de Sombreuil was also imprisoned again. When he entered the prison with his daughter, all the inmates rose to do her honour. In the ensuing June, after a mock trial, her father and brother were put to death, and she remained for many years alone with only the memory of her past days.

THE VENDÉENS

1793

WHILE the greater part of France had been falling into habits of self-indulgence, and from thence into infidelity and revolution, there was one district where the people had not forgotten to fear God and honour the King.

This was in the tract surrounding the Loire, the south of which is now called La Vendée, and was then termed the Bocage, or the Woodland. It is full of low hills and narrow valleys, divided into small fields, inclosed by high thick hedge-rows; so that when viewed from the top of one of the hills, the whole country appears perfectly green, excepting near harvest-time, when small patches of golden corn catch the eye, or where here and there a church-tower peeps above the trees, in the midst of the flat red-tiled roofs of the surrounding village. The roads are deep lanes, often in the winter beds of streams, and in the summer completely roofed by the thick foliage of the trees, whose branches meet overhead.

The gentry of La Vendée, instead of idling their time at Paris, lived on their own estates in kindly intercourse with their neighbours, and constantly helping and befriending their tenants, visiting them at their farms, talking over their crops and cattle, giving them advice, and inviting them on holidays to dance in the courts of their castles, and themselves joining in their sports. The peasants were a hard-working, sober, and pious people, devoutly attending their churches, reverencing their clergy, and, as well they might, loving and honouring their good landlords.

But as the Revolution began to make its deadly progress at Paris, a gloom spread over this happy country. The Paris mob, who could not bear to see any one higher in station than themselves, thirsted for noble blood, and the gentry were driven from France, or else imprisoned or put to death. An oath contrary to the laws of their Church was required of the clergy, those who refused it were thrust out of their parishes, and others placed in their room; and throughout France all the youths of a certain age were forced to draw lots to decide who should serve in the Republican army.

This conscription filled up the measure. The Vendéens had grieved over the flight of their landlords, they had sheltered and hidden their priests, and heard their ministrations in secret; but when their young men were to be carried away from them, and made the defenders and instruments of those who were murdering their King, overthrowing their Church, and ruining their country, they could endure it no longer, but in the spring of 1793, soon after the execution of Louis XVI. a rising took place in Anjou, at the village of St. Florent, headed by a pedlar named Cathelineau, and they drove back the Blues, as they called the revolutionary soldiers, who had come to enforce the conscription. They begged Monsieur de Bonchamp, a gentleman in the neighbourhood, to take the command; and, willing to devote himself to the cause of his King, he complied, saying, as he did so, "We must not aspire to earthly rewards; such would be beneath the purity of our motives, the holiness of our cause. We must not even aspire to glory, for a civil war affords none. We shall see our castles fall, we shall be proscribed, slandered, stripped of our possessions, perhaps put to death; but let us thank God for giving us strength to do our duty to the end."

The next person on whom the peasants cast their eyes possessed as true and strong a heart, though he was too young to count the cost of loyalty with the same calm spirit of self-devotion. The Marquis de la Rochejaquelein, one of the most excellent of the nobles of Poitou, had already emigrated with his wife and all his family, excepting Henri, the eldest son, who, though but eighteen years of age, had been placed in the dangerous post of an officer in the

Royal Guards. When Louis XVI. had been obliged to dismiss these brave men, he had obtained a promise from each officer that he would not leave France, but wait for some chance of delivering that unhappy country. Henri had therefore remained at Paris, until after the 10th of August, 1792, when the massacre at the Tuileries took place, and the imprisonment of the Royal Family commenced; and then every gentleman being in danger in the city, he had come to his father's deserted castle of Durballière in Poitou.

He was nearly twenty, tall and slender, with fair hair, an oval face, and blue eyes, very gentle, although full of animation. He was active and dexterous in all manly sports, especially shooting and riding; he was a man of few words; and his manners were so shy, modest, and retiring, that his friends used to say he was more like an Englishman than a Frenchman.

Hearing that he was alone at Durballière, and knowing that as an officer in the Guards, and also as being of the age liable to the conscription, he was in danger from the Revolutionists in the neighbouring towns, his cousin, the Marquis de Lescure, sent to invite him to his strong castle of Clisson, which was likewise situated in the Bocage. This castle afforded a refuge to many others who were in danger—to nuns driven from their convents, dispossessed clergy, and persons who dreaded to remain at their homes, but who felt reassured under the shelter of the castle, and by the character of its owner, a young man of six-and-twenty, who, though of high and unshaken loyalty, had never concerned himself with politics, but led a quiet and studious life, and was everywhere honoured and respected.

The winter passed in great anxiety, and when in the spring the rising at Anjou took place, and the new government summoned all who could bear arms to assist in quelling it, a council was held among the party at Clisson on the steps to be taken. Henri, as the youngest, spoke first, saying he would rather perish than fight against the peasants; nor among the whole assembly was there one person willing to take the safer but meaner course of deserting the cause of their King and country. "Yes," said the Duchess de Donnissan, mother to the young wife of the Marquis de Lescure, "I see you are all of the same opinion. Better death than dishonour. I approve your courage. It is a settled thing:" and seating herself in her arm-chair, she concluded, "Well, then, we must die."

For some little time all remained quiet at Clisson; but at length the order for the conscription arrived, and a few days before the time appointed for the lots to be drawn, a boy came to the castle bringing a note to Henri from his aunt at St. Aubin. "Monsieur Henri," said the boy, "they say you are to draw for the conscription next Sunday; but may not your tenants rise against it in the meantime? Come with me, sir, the whole country is longing for you, and will obey you."

Henri instantly promised to come, but some of the ladies would have persuaded him not to endanger himself—representing, too, that if he was missing on the appointed day, M. de Lescure might be made responsible for him. The Marquis, however, silenced them, saying to his cousin, "You are prompted by honour and duty to put yourself at the head of your tenants. Follow out your plan. I am only grieved at not being able to go with you; and certainly no fear of imprisonment will lead me to dissuade you from doing your duty."

"Well, I will come and rescue you," said Henri, embracing him, and his eyes glancing with a noble soldier-like expression and an eagle look.

As soon as the servants were gone to bed, he set out with a guide, with a stick in his hand and a pair of pistols in his belt; and travelling through the fields, over hedges and ditches, for fear of meeting with the Blues, arrived at St. Aubin, and from thence went on to meet M. de Bonchamp and his little army. But he found to his disappointment that they had just been defeated, and the chieftains, believing that all was lost, had dispersed their troops. He went to his own home, dispirited and grieved; but no sooner did the men of St. Aubin learn the arrival of their young lord, than they came trooping to the castle, entreating him to place himself at their head.

In the early morning, the castle court, the fields, the village, were thronged with stout hardy farmers and labourers, in grey coats, with broad flapping hats, and red woollen handkerchiefs round their necks. On their shoulders were spits, scythes, and even sticks; happy was the man who could bring an old fowling-piece, and still more rejoiced the owner of some powder, intended for blasting some neighbouring quarry. All had bold true hearts, ready to suffer and to die in the cause of their Church and of their young innocent imprisoned King.

A mistrust of his own powers, a fear of ruining these brave men, crossed the mind of the youth as he looked forth upon them, and he exclaimed, " If my father was but here, you might trust to him. Yet by my courage I will show myself worthy, and lead you. If I go forward, follow me; if I draw back, kill me; if I am slain, avenge me!" They replied by shouts of joy, and it was instantly resolved to march upon the next village, which was occupied by the rebel troops. They gained a complete victory, driving away the Blues, and taking two small pieces of cannon, and immediately joined M. de Bonchamp and Cathelineau, who, encouraged by their success,

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again gathered their troops and gained some further advantages.

In the meantime, the authorities had sent to Clisson and arrested M. de Lescure, his wife, her parents, and some of their guests, who were conducted to Bressuire, the nearest town, and there closely guarded. There was great danger that the Republicans would revenge their losses upon them, but the calm dignified deportment of M. de Lescure obliged them to respect him so much that no injury was offered to him. At last came the joyful news that the Royalist army was approaching. The Republican soldiers immediately quitted the town, and the inhabitants all came to ask the protection of the prisoners, desiring to send their goods to Clisson for security, and thinking themselves guarded by the presence of M. and Madame de Lescure.

M. de Lescure and his cousin Bernard de Marigny mounted their horses and rode out to meet their friends. In a quarter of an hour afterwards, Madame de Lescure heard the shouts "Long live the King"; and the next minute Henri de la Rochejaquelein hurried into the room, crying, "I have saved you." The peasants marched in to the number of 20,000, and spread themselves through the town, but in their victory they had gained no taste for blood or plunder—they did not hurt a single inhabitant, nor touch anything that was not their own. Madame de Lescure heard some of them wishing for tobacco, and asked if there was none in the town. "Oh yes, there is plenty to be sold, but we have no money;" and they were very thankful to her for giving the small sum they required. Monsieur de Donnissan saw two men disputing in the street, and one drew his sword, when he interfered, saying, "Our Lord prayed for His murderers, and would one soldier of the Catholic army kill another ?" The two instantly embraced.

Three times a day these peasant warriors knelt at their prayers, in the churches if they were near them, if not, in the open field, and seldom have been equalled the piety, the humility, the self-devotion alike of chiefs and of followers. The frightful cruelties committed by the enemy were returned by mercy; though such of them as fell into the hands of the Republicans were shot without pity, yet their prisoners were instantly set at liberty after being made to promise not to serve against them again, and having their hair shaved off in order that they might be recognized.

Whenever an enterprize was resolved on, the curates gave notice to their parishioners that the leaders would be at such a place at such a time, upon which they crowded to the spot, and assembled around the white standard of France with such weapons as they could muster.

The clergy then heard them confess their sins, gave them absolution, and blessed them; then, while they set forward, returned to the churches where their wives and children were praying for their success. They did not fight like regular soldiers, but, creeping through the hedge-rows and coppices, burst unexpectedly upon the Blues, who, entangled in the hollow lanes, ignorant of the country, and amazed by the suddenness of the attack, had little power to resist. The chieftains were always foremost in danger; above all the eager young Henri, with his eye on the white standard, and on the blue sky, and his hand making the sign of the cross without which he never charged the enemy, dashed on first, fearless of peril, regardless of his life, thinking only of his duty to his King and the protection of his followers.

'It was calmness and resignation which chiefly distinguished M. de Lescure, the Saint of Poitou, as the peasants called him from his great piety, his even temper, and the kindness and the wonderful mercifulness of his disposition. Though constantly at the head of his troops, leading them into the most dangerous places and never sparing himself, not one man was slain by his hand, nor did he even permit a prisoner to receive the least injury in his presence. When one of the Republicans once presented his musket close to his breast, he quietly put it aside with his hand, and only said, " Take away the prisoner." His calmness was indeed well founded, and his trust never failed. Once when the little army had received a considerable check, and his cousin M. de Marigny was in despair, and throwing his pistols on the table, exclaimed, " I fight no longer," he took him by the arm, led him to the window, and pointing to a troop of peasants kneeling at their evening prayers, he said, " See there a pledge of our hopes, and doubt no longer that we shall conquer in our turn."

Their greatest victory was at Saumur, owing chiefly to the gallantry of Henri, who threw his hat into the midst of the enemy, shouting to his followers, " Who will go and fetch it for me ? " and rushing forward, drove all before him, and made his way into the town on one side, while M. de Lescure, together with Stofflet, a gamekeeper, another of the chiefs, made their entrance on the other side. M. de Lescure was wounded in the arm, and on the sight of his blood the peasants gave back, and would have fled, had not Stofflet threatened to shoot the first who turned ; and in the meantime M. de Lescure, tying up his arm with a handkerchief, declared it was nothing, and led them onwards.

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The city was entirely in their hands, and their thankful delight was excessive; but they only displayed it by ringing the bells, singing the *Te Deum*, and parading the streets. Henri was almost out of his senses with exultation; but at last he fell into a reverie, as he stood, with his arms folded, gazing on the mighty citadel which had yielded to efforts such as theirs. His friends roused him from his dream by their remarks, and he replied, "I am reflecting on our success, and am confounded."

They now resolved to elect a general-in-chief, and M. de Lescure was the first to propose Cathelineau, the pedlar, who had first come forward in the cause. It was a wondrous thing when the nobles, the gentry, and experienced officers who had served in the regular army, all willingly placed themselves under the command of the simple untrained peasant, without a thought of selfishness or of jealousy. Nor did Cathelineau himself show any trace of pride, or lose his complete humility of mind or manner; but by each word and deed he fully proved how wise had been their judgment, and well earned the title given him by the peasants of the "Saint of Anjou."

It was now that their hopes were highest; they were more numerous and better armed than they had ever been before, and they even talked of a march to Paris to "fetch their little King, and have him crowned at Chollet," the chief town of La Vendée. But martyrdom, the highest glory to be obtained on this earth, was already shedding its brightness round those devoted men who were counted worthy to suffer, and it was in a higher and a purer world that they were to meet their royal child.

Cathelineau turned towards Nantes, leaving Henri de la Rochejaquelein, to his great vexation, to defend Saumur with a party of peasants. But he found it impossible to prevent these poor men from returning to their homes; they did not understand the importance of garrison duty, and gradually departed, leaving their commander alone with a few officers, with whom he used to go through the town at night, shouting out, "Long live the King!" at the places where there ought to have been sentinels. At last, when his followers were reduced to eight, he left the town, and, rejoicing to be once more in the open field, overtook his friends at Angers, where they had just rescued a great number of clergy who had been imprisoned there, and daily threatened with death. "Do not thank us," said the peasants to the liberated priests; "it is for you that we fight. If we had not saved you, we should not have ventured to return home. Since you are freed, we see plainly that the good God is on our side."

But the tide was now about to turn. The Government in Paris sent a far stronger force into the Bocage, and desolated it in a cruel manner. Clisson was burnt to the ground with the very fireworks which had been prepared for the christening of its master's eldest child, and which had not been used because of the sorrowful days when she was born. M. de Lescure had long expected its destruction, but had not chosen to remove the furniture, lest he should discourage the peasants. His family were with the army, where alone there was now any safety for the weak and helpless. At Nantes the attack was unsuccessful, and Cathelineau himself received a wound of which he died in a few days, rejoicing at having been permitted to shed his blood in such a cause.

The army, of which M. d'Elbée became the leader, now returned to Poitou, and gained a great victory at Chatillon; but here many of them forgot the mercy they had usually shown, and, enraged by the sight of their burnt cottages, wasted fields, and murdered relatives, they fell upon the prisoners and began to slaughter them. M. de Lescure, coming in haste, called out to them to desist. "No, no," cried M. de Marigny; "let me slay these monsters who have burnt your castle." "Then, Marigny," said his cousin, "you must fight with me. You are too cruel; you will perish by the sword." And he saved these unhappy men for the time; but they were put to death on their way to their own army.

Though occasional successes still maintained the hopes of the Vendéens, misfortunes and defeats now became frequent; they were unable to save their country from the devastations of the enemy, and disappointments began to thin the numbers of the soldiers. Henri, while fighting in a hollow road, was struck in the right hand by a ball, which broke his thumb in three places. He continued to direct his men, but they were at length driven back from their post. He was obliged to leave the army for some days; and though he soon appeared again at the head of the men of St. Aubin, he never recovered the use of his hand.

Shortly after, both D'Elbée and Bonchamp were desperately wounded; and M. de Lescure, while waving his followers on to attack a Republican post, received a ball in the head. The enemy pressed on the broken and defeated army with overwhelming force, and the few remaining chiefs resolved to cross the Loire and take refuge in Brittany. It was much against the opinion of M. de Lescure; but, in his feeble and suffering state, he could not make himself heard, nor could Henri's representations prevail; the peasants, in terror and dismay, were hastening across as fast as they could obtain boats to carry them. The enemy was near at hand, and Stofflet, Marigny, and the other chiefs were only deliberating whether they should not kill the prisoners whom they could not take with them, and, if set at liberty, would only add to the numbers of their pursuers. The order for their death had been given; but, before it could be executed, M. de Lescure had raised his head to exclaim, "It is too horrible!" and M. de Bonchamp at the same moment said, almost with his last breath, "Spare them!" The officers who stood by rushed to the generals, crying out that Bonchamp commanded that they should be pardoned. They were set at liberty; and thus the two Vendéen chiefs avenged their deaths by saving five thousand of their enemies!

M. de Bonchamp expired immediately after; but M. de Lescure had still much to suffer in the long and painful passage across the river, and afterwards, while carried along the rough roads to Varades in an arm-chair upon two pikes, his wife and her maid supporting his feet. The Bretons received them kindly, and gave him a small room, where, the next day, he sent for the rest of the council, telling them they ought to choose a new general, since M. d'Elbée was missing. They answered that he himself alone could be commander. "Gentlemen," he answered: "I am mortally wounded; and even if I am to live, which I do not expect, I shall be long unfit to serve. The army must instantly have an active chief, loved by all, known to the peasants, trusted by every one. It is the only way of saving us. M. de la Rochejaquelein alone is known to the soldiers of all the divisions. M. de Donnissan, my father-in-law, does not belong to this part of the country, and would not be as readily followed. The choice I propose would encourage the soldiers; and I entreat you to choose M. de la Rochejaquelein. As to me, if I live, you know I shall not quarrel with Henri; I shall be his aide-de-camp."

Henri accordingly took the command; but it was a melancholy office that devolved upon him of dragging onward his broken and dejected peasants, half starved, half clothed, and followed by a wretched train of women, children, and wounded; a sad change from the bright hopes with which, not six months before, he had been called to the head of his tenants. Yet still his high courage gained some triumphs, which for a time revived the spirits of his forces and restored their confidence. He was active and undaunted, and it was about this time, when in pursuit of the Blues, he was attacked by a foot-soldier when alone in a narrow lane. His right hand was useless, but he seized the man's collar with his left, and held him fast, managing his horse with his legs till his men came up. He would not allow them to kill the soldier, but set him free, saying, "Return to the Republicans, and tell them that you were alone with the general of the brigands, who had but one hand and no weapons, yet you could not kill him." Brigands was the name given by the Republicans, the true robbers, to the Royalists, who, in fact, by this time, owing to the wild life they had so long led, had acquired a somewhat rude and savage appearance. They wore grey cloth coats and trousers, broad hats, white sashes with knots of different colours to mark the rank of the officers, and red woollen handkerchiefs. These were made in the country, and were at first chiefly worn by Henri, who usually had one round his neck, another round his waist, and a third to support his wounded hand; but the other officers having heard the Blues cry out to aim at the red handkerchief, themselves adopted the same badge, in order that he might be less conspicuous.

In the meantime a few days' rest at Laval had at first so alleviated the sufferings of M. de Lescure, that hopes were entertained of his recovery; but he ventured on greater exertions of strength than he was able to bear, and fever returned, which had weakened him greatly before it became necessary to travel onwards. Early in the morning, a day or two before their departure, he called to his wife, who was lying on a mattress on the floor, and desired her to open the curtains, asking, as she did so, if it was a clear day. "Yes," said she. "Then," he answered, "I have a sort of veil before my eyes, I cannot see distinctly; I always thought my wound was mortal, and now I no longer doubt. My dear, I must leave you, that is my only regret, except that I could not restore my King to the throne; I leave you in the midst of a civil war, that is what afflicts me. Try to save yourself. Disguise yourself, and attempt to reach England." Then seeing her choked with tears, he continued: "Yes, your grief alone makes me regret life; for my own part, I die tranquil; I have indeed sinned, but I have always served God with piety; I have fought, and I die for Him, and I hope in His mercy. I have often seen death, and I do not fear it. I go to heaven with a sure trust, I grieve but for you; I hoped to have made you happy; if I ever have given you any reason to complain, forgive me." Finding her grief beyond all consolation, he allowed her to call the surgeons, saying that it was possible he might be mistaken. They gave some hope, which cheered her spirits, though he still said he did not believe them. The next day they left Laval; and on the way, while the carriage was stopping, a person came to the door and read the details of the execution of Marie Antoinette, which Madame de Lescure had kept from his knowledge. It was a great shock to him, for he had known the Queen personally, and throughout the day he wearied himself with exclamations on the horrible crime. That night at Ernée he received the Sacrament, and at the same time became speechless, and could only lie holding his wife's hand and looking sometimes at her, sometimes toward heaven. But the cruel enemy were close behind, and there was no rest on earth even for the dying. Madame de Lescure implored her friends to leave them behind ; but they told her she would be exposed to a frightful death, and that his body would fall into the enemy's hands ; and she was forced to consent to his removal. Her mother and her other friends would not permit her to remain in the carriage with him ; she was placed on horseback, and her maid and the surgeon were with him. An hour after, on the 3rd of November, he died, but his wife did not know her loss till the evening when they arrived at Fougères ; for though the surgeon left the carriage on his death, the maid, fearing the effect which the knowledge might have upon her in the midst of her journey, remained for seven hours in the carriage by his side, during two of which she was in a fainting fit.

When Madame de Lescure and Henri de la Rochejaquelein met the next morning, they sat for a quarter of an hour without speaking, and weeping bitterly. At last she said, " You have lost your best friend," and he replied, " Take my life, if it could restore him."

Scarcely anything can be imagined more miserable than the condition of the army, or more terrible than the situation of the young general, who felt himself responsible for its safety, and was compelled daily to see its sufferings and find his plans thwarted by the obstinacy and folly of the other officers, crushed by an overwhelming force, knowing that there was

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no quarter from which help could come, yet still struggling on in fulfilment of his sad duty. The hopes and expectations which had filled his heart a few months back had long passed away; nothing was around him but misery, nothing before him but desolation; but still he never failed in courage, in mildness, in confidence in heaven.

At Mans he met with a horrible defeat; at first, indeed, with a small party he broke the columns of the enemy, but fresh men were constantly brought up, and his peasants gave way and retreated, their officers following them. He tried to lead them back through the hedges, and if he had succeeded, would surely have gained the victory. Three times with two other officers he dashed into the midst of the Blues; but the broken, dispirited peasants would not follow him, not one would even turn to fire a shot. At last, in leaping a hedge, his saddle turned, and he fell, without indeed being hurt, but the sight of his fall added to the terror of the miserable Vendéens. He struggled long and desperately through the long night that followed to defend the gates of the town, but with the light of morning the enemy perceived his weakness and effected their entrance. His followers had in the meantime gradually retired into the country beyond, but those who could not escape fell a prey to the cruelty of the Republicans. "I thought you had perished," said Madame de Lescure, when he overtook her. "Would that I had," was his answer.

He now resolved to recross the Loire, and return to his native Bocage, where the well-known woods would afford better protection to his followers. It was at Craon, on their route to the river, that Madame de Lescure saw him for the last time, as he rallied his men, who had been terrified by a false alarm.

She did not return to La Vendée, but, with her mother, was sheltered by the peasants of Brittany throughout the winter and spring until they found means to leave the country.

The Vendéens reached the Loire at Ancenis, but they were only able to find two small boats to carry them over. On the other side, however, were four great ferry-boats loaded with hay; and Henri, with Stofflet, three other officers, and eighteen soldiers crossed the river in their two boats, intending to take possession of them, send them back for the rest of the army, and in the meantime protect the passage from the Blues on the Vendéen side. Unfortunately, however, he had scarcely crossed before the pursuers came down upon his troops, drove them back from Ancenis, and entirely prevented them from attempting the passage, while at the same time Henri and his companions were attacked and forced from the river by a body of Republicans on their side. A last resistance was attempted by the retreating Vendéens at Savenay, where they fought nobly but in vain; four thousand were shot on the field of battle, the chiefs were made prisoners and carried to Nantes or Angers, where they were guillotined, and a few who succeeded in escaping found shelter among the Bretons, or one by one found their way back to La Vendée. M. de Donnissan was amongst those who were guillotined, and M. d'Elbée, who was seized shortly after, was shot with his wife.

Henri, with his few companions, when driven from the banks of the Loire, dismissed the eighteen soldiers, whose number would only have attracted attention without being sufficient for protection; but the five chiefs crossed the fields and wandered through the country without meeting a single inhabitant—all the houses were burnt down, and the few remaining peasants hidden in the woods. At last, after four-and-twenty hours' walking, they came to an inhabited farm, where they laid down to sleep on the straw. The next moment the farmer came to tell them the Blues were coming; but they were so worn out with fatigue, that they would not move. The Blues were happily, also, very tired, and, without making any search, laid down on the other side of the heap of straw, and also fell asleep. Before daylight the Vendéens rose and set out again, walking miles and miles in the midst of desolation, until, after several days, they came to Henri's own village of St. Aubin, where he sought out his aunt, who was in concealment there, and remained with her for three days, utterly overwhelmed with grief at his fatal separation from his army, and only longing for an opportunity of giving his life in the good cause.

Beyond all his hopes, the peasants no sooner heard his name than once more they rallied round the white standard, as determined as ever not to yield to the revolutionary government; and the beginning of the year 1794 found him once more at the head of a considerable force, encamped in the forest of Vésins, guarding the villages around from the cruelties of the Blues. He was now doubly beloved and trusted by the followers who had proved his worth, and who even yet looked forward to triumphs beneath his brave guidance; but it was not so with him: he had learnt the lesson of disappointment, and though always active and cheerful, his mind was made up, and the only hope he cherished was of meeting the death of a soldier. His head-quarters were in the midst of a forest, where one of the Republican officers, who was made prisoner, was much surprised to find the much-dreaded chieftain of the Royalists living in a hut formed of boughs of trees, dressed almost like a peasant, and with his arm still in a sling. This person was shot, because he was found to be commissioned to promise pardon to the peasants, and afterwards to massacre them; but Henri had not learnt cruelty from his persecutors, and his last words were of forgiveness.

It was on Ash Wednesday that he had repulsed an attack of the enemy, and had almost driven them out of the wood, when, perceiving two soldiers hiding behind a hedge, he stopped, crying out, "Surrender, I spare you." As he spoke one of them levelled his musket, fired, and stretched him dead on the ground without a groan. Stofflet coming up the next moment, killed the murderer with one stroke of his sword; but the remaining soldier was spared out of regard to the last words of the general. The Vendéens wept bitterly, but there was no time to indulge their sorrow, for the enemy were returning upon them; and, to save their chieftain's corpse from insult, they hastily dug a grave, in which they placed both bodies, and retreated as the Blues came up to occupy the ground. The Republicans sought for the spot, but it was preserved from their knowledge; and the high-spirited, pure-hearted Henri de la Rochejaquelein sleeps beside his enemy in the midst of the woodlands where he won for himself eternal honour. His name is still loved beyond all others; the Vendéens seldom pronounce it without touching their hats, and it is the highest glory of many a family that one of their number had served under Monsieur Henri.

Stofflet succeeded to the command, and carried on the war with great skill and courage for another year, though with barbarities such as had never been permitted by the gentlemen; but his career was stained by the death of Marigny, whom, by false accusations, he was induced to sentence to be shot.

Marigny showed great courage and resignation, himself giving the word to fire—perhaps at that moment remembering the warning of M. de Lescure. Stofflet repented bitterly, and never ceased to lament his death. He was at length made prisoner, and shot, with his last words declaring his devotion to his King and his faith.

Thus ends the tale of the Vendéen war, undertaken in the best of causes, for the honour of God and His Church, and the rescue of one of the most innocent of kings, by men whose saintly characters and dauntless courage have seldom been surpassed by martyrs or heroes of any age. It closed with blood, with fire, with miseries almost unequalled; yet who would dare to say that the lives of Cathelineau, Bonchamp, Lescure, La Rochejaquelein, with their hundreds of brave and pious followers, were devoted in vain? Who could wish to see their brightness dimmed with earthly rewards?

And though the powers of evil were permitted to prevail on earth, yet what could their utmost triumph effect against the faithful, but to make for them, in the words of the child king for whom they fought, one of those thorny paths that lead to glory!

THE FAITHFUL SLAVES OF HAITI

1793

Mournful as are in general the annals of slavery, yet even this cloud is not without its silver lining; and noble deeds of fidelity and self-devotion are on record even from those whom their masters have been accustomed to look on as so degraded as to be incapable of more than an animal species of loyalty.

The French are not in general bad slave-masters. Excitement does indeed stir their Celtic blood into a state in which they will perpetrate horrible ferocities; but in ordinary life their instinct of courtesy and amiability makes them perhaps the least obnoxious of all nations to those whom they believe their inferiors, whether in the bondage of conquest or of slavery.

No doubt, however, there was a fearful arrear of wrongs in the beautiful West Indian island of Hispaniola, or St. Domingo, as it was called when it was shared between France and Spain, with the boundary between them of a river, now known by the portentous name of Massacre. One of the most fertile of all the lovely isles whose aspect had enchanted their discoverer, St. Domingo was a region of rapid wealth to the French Creoles, who lived at ease, and full of luxury and enjoyment, on their rich plantations of sugar, cotton, and coffee, and, often men of high birth, further formed, in right of their white skins, a jealous aristocracy, holding their heads high above the dark population below them, alike of free mulattoes of mixed descent and of negro slaves. Little were they prepared for the decree of the French National Convention, which at one sweep levelled all distinctions—placing the black and brown of every tint on an equality with the whites. The consequence was that the tricoloured cockade was trampled on by the indignant Creoles, who refused obedience to the decree of the mother country, and proceeded to elect a General Assembly of their own; while the aggrieved mulattoes collected on their side in armed bodies for the defence of their newly-granted privileges.

In the midst a more terrible enemy arose. The slaves, with the notes of freedom ringing in their ears, rose in a body, and began to burn the plantations and to massacre the whites. Fugitives came rushing into Capetown, the capital, from all quarters; and at each plantation reached by the insurgents, the slaves, even if previously contented, were gathered into the flood of savagery, and joined in the war of extermination. In less than two months, 2,000 white persons, of all ranks, sexes, and ages, had perished, 480 sugar plantations, and 900 coffee, indigo, and cotton settlements had been destroyed. With the horrors and the bloodshed of those days, however, we are not concerned, nor need we trace the frightful and protracted war that finally established negro supremacy over the island that now bears the name of Haiti. It is with the bright spots in the dark picture that we are to deal.

Count de Lopinot, an old officer in the army, who had settled with his wife upon the island, had been so uniformly kind to his slaves, that their hearts were with him; they rose for the protection of him and his family, and when the way of escape was open, entreated him to take them all with him, to live and die in his service. The place chosen for his retreat was the English island of Trinidad, where he obtained from Government a grant of waste land among the mountains, to be selected by himself. The centre of Trinidad is so mountainous, as to be still uncultivated and unsettled, and the Count was forced to take with him his body-guard of faithful negroes, to cut a passage for him through the tropical forest.

The spot he selected was beautifully situated, fertile, and well watered; but the best road he could make to it was so rugged as to be unfit for the transport of sugar, and he therefore laid it out for cocoa—upon a design peculiar to himself. The outline of his grounds represented a *gigantic* French general officer, epaulettes and all, upon whose prostrate form were ranged cocoa plants, at about fifteen or twenty feet apart, each about the size of a gooseberry-bush; and at intervals, the forest tree, known by the negroes as Cocoa-Mammy, because it is supposed to shade, nourish, and even gather dew for the cocoa plants under its charge. It is from sixty to eighty feet high, and bears brilliant flame-coloured blossoms, so that the hills of Trinidad seem all in a blaze in its flowering season. To this curiously-planned estate the grateful Count gave the surname of La Reconnaissance, and on the first day when he brought his Countess, and installed the negro families in their new abodes, he celebrated a solemn thanksgiving. So much was he beloved, that twenty years after his death the negroes of La Reconnaissance still kept a holiday in his memory.

These negroes were loyal in a body; but on another estate in St. Domingo there was a single loyal exception, a genuine African, not born on the estate, but brought thither by the slave trade. The whole of his master's family were massacred, excepting two little boys, of five and three years old, whom he contrived to hide, and afterwards to escape with to the coast, where he put them on board ship, and succeeded in conveying them to Carolina. Happily, in those days, slavery was apparently on the decline, even in the Southern States, and free negroes were allowed to be at large in the streets of Charlestown, so that the faithful man was able to maintain the children by his labour; and not only this, but to fulfil his earnest purpose of educating them consistently with their parents' station in life. He placed them at a good boarding-school, and, while living a hard and frugal life himself, gave them each a dollar a week for pocket-money.

The elder of the two went to sea, rose to be captain of a merchant-ship, and married a Spanish heiress in Cuba, when, on settling upon her estate, he at once sent for his good old guardian, built him a house, and made him an overseer, giving him, in memory of old times, a dollar every week for pocket-money, and treating him with great affection.

Another negro, named Eustache, who was born in 1773, on the sugar plantation of Monsieur Belin de Villeneuve, in the northern part of the island, had been always a remarkably intelligent man, though entirely ignorant, and not even able to read. When the attacks on the houses of the whites took place he is said, by his timely warnings and ingenious contrivances, to have at different times saved the lives of no less than 400 white persons without betraying the negroes; and, lastly, he was enabled to place his master safely on board an American vessel with a sufficient cargo of sugar to secure him from destitution. Eustache himself embarked at the same time, considering himself as still M. Belin's slave as completely as though they were still on the plantation. On the voyage the vessel was captured by an English privateer; but, while all the Americans and French were put under hatches, the negro was left at large to profit by the liberty the English sailors fancied they had conferred upon him. They were a drunken, undisciplined set, and while they were carousing Eustache played all sorts of antics for their amusement, until they were so completely off their guard, that he succeeded in releasing and arming the prisoners and carrying off the prize, with the English as prisoners in their turn, safe into the roads of Baltimore. He there hired himself out to work, and applied all his earnings to the assistance of the many ruined French from St. Domingo, who had taken refuge there. After a time it was supposed that the French power was re-established in the island, and

M. Belin ventured back, with a number of his friends, in hopes of recovering his property; but he found himself in greater danger than ever. The town of Fort Dauphin was occupied by the Spaniards, and 20,000 negroes, commanded by a black called Jean Français, were encamped on the heights near the town, and massacred every Frenchman they encountered. The Spaniards gave the unhappy French no arms nor assistance, and M. Belin fled for his life to the sea-shore, pursued by a party of blacks. He saw a Spanish guard before him, and, throwing off his coat, ran in among them, giving his name to the officer. A Spanish uniform was thrown over him, and he was saved.

Eustache had been separated from his master in the crowd, and, uncertain whether he were still alive, resolved at least to save his property. He actually persuaded Jean Français' wife to let him hide some boxes of valuables under her bed, by telling her that, if his master had been massacred, they would belong to himself; and then, going to the place of slaughter, examined all the corpses, but happily in vain. After much inquiry, he discovered M. Belin, and succeeded in getting both him and his property on board ship, and bringing all safely a second time to Baltimore.

M. Belin afterwards resided at Port au Prince, where he became president of the council. Eustache continued in his service as attached and devoted as ever, and after a time observing that he was distressed by the increasing dimness of his eyesight, this devoted slave went secretly at four o'clock every morning to get himself taught to read, overcame all difficulties, and, when he thought himself perfect in the art, came to his master with a book, and thenceforth kept the old man occupied and amused.

M. Belin took care to emancipate his faithful servant before his death, and left him a considerable legacy, which he regarded as a trust for his master's distressed countrymen, and spent from day to day in acts of beneficence, gaining his own livelihood by hiring himself out as a cook at great dinners, for he was admirable in that line, and obtained constant employment. In 1831 he was still alive, and was sought out to receive the prize for which ten years before M. Monthyon had left an endowment, to serve as an acknowledgment of the noblest action that could each year be discovered. Eustache's exertions were then made known, and in the words of the discourse made on that occasion, his daily deeds were thus described : " Every moment some new instance of his incorrigible generosity comes to light. Sometimes it is poor children whom he has put out to nurse, or others whose apprentice fee he has paid. Sometimes he buys tools or agricultural implements for workmen without means. Here, relations of his master obtain from him large sums which they will not restore and that he will never demand ; there he is left unpaid by persons who have employed him and whom he does not press because they have fallen into misfortune, and he respects distress." When he found, to his great surprise, how much his doings were admired, he answered one of the committee who had sought him out, " Indeed, sir, I am not doing this for men, but for the Master above."

THE PETITIONERS FOR PARDON

1720 AND ABOUT 1805

No one in our own country has deserved warmer or more loving esteem than Helen Walker, the Scottish maiden, who, though she would not utter a word of untruth to save her sister from being sentenced to death, yet came on foot from Edinburgh to London, made her way to the Duke of Argyle, and being introduced by him, by her entreaties obtained that sister's pardon from Queen Caroline, who was acting as Regent in the absence of George II. It is hard to say which was the most glorious, the God-fearing truth that strengthened this peasant-girl to risk a life so dear to her, or the trustful courage and perseverance that carried her through a journey, which in the early part of the eighteenth century was both tedious and full of danger; and it is satisfactory to know that her after-life, though simple and homely, by no means was unworthy of the high excellence of her youth.

In the beginning of last century, a girl younger than Helen Walker was impelled to a journey beside which that from Edinburgh to London seems only like a summer stroll, and her motive was in like manner deep affection, love truly stronger than death.

Prascovia was the daughter of a captain in the Russian army, who for some unknown reason had undergone the sentence of exile to Siberia, from the capricious and insane Czar Paul I. The Russian Government, being despotic, is naturally inclined to be suspicious, and it had long been the custom to send off prisoners supposed to be dangerous to the state, to live in the intensely cold and remote district of Siberia. Actual criminals are marched off in chains, and kept working in the mines; but political offenders are permitted to live with their families, have a weekly sum allowed for their support, and when it is insufficient, can eke it out by any form of labour they prefer, whether by hunting, or by such farming as the climate will allow.

The miseries of the exiles have been much mitigated in these later times, many more comforts are permitted them, and though closely watched, and suffering from many annoying regulations, those of higher rank receive a sufficient sum out of their own revenues to enable them to live in tolerable ease, and without actual drudgery ; and at Tobolsk, the capital of Siberia, there is a highly educated and accomplished society of banished Poles and of Russians who have incurred suspicion.

Under the Czars who reigned before the kind-hearted Alexander I., the banishment was far more terrible. It was not only the being absent from home and friends, but it was a fall from all the luxuries of civilized life to the utmost poverty, and that in a climate of fearful severity, with a winter lasting nine months, and the sun unseen for many weeks of that time. Captain Lopouloff was condemned for life, was placed in the village of Ischim, far to the north of Tobolsk, and only obtained an allowance of ten kopeks a day. His wife, and their little girl of about three years old, accompanied him, and the former adapted herself patiently to her situation, working hard at the common domestic cares for which she had been used to trust to servants ; and as the little Prascovia grew older, she not only helped her mother, but gained employment in the village, going out to assist in the late and scanty rye harvest, and obtaining a small bundle of the rye as her wages. She was very happy, even in this wild dreary home, amid all the deep snows, iron frosts, and long darkness, until she was nearly fifteen, when she began to understand how wretched her father was in his banishment. He had sent a petition to the Governor of Siberia, in the charge of an officer, who had promised to represent his case strongly, and the watching for the

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answer, and continued disappointment, whenever a courier arrived from Tobolsk, rendered him so restless, that he no longer tried to put on a cheerful countenance before his daughter, but openly lamented his hard fate, in seeing her grow up untaught and working with her hands like the meanest serf.

His despair awoke Prascovia from her childish enjoyments. She daily prayed that he might be brought home and comforted, and, as she said herself, it one day darted into her mind like a flash of lightning, just as she finished saying her prayers, that she might go to Petersburg and obtain his pardon. Long did she dwell upon the thought, going alone among the pine-trees to dream over it, and to pray that grace and strength might be given her for this great work—this exceeding bliss of restoring her father to his home. Still she durst not mention the project; it seemed so impossible, that it died away upon her lips whenever she tried to ask her father's permission, till at last she set herself a time, at which nothing should prevent her from speaking. The day came; she went out among the whispering pines, and again prayed for strength to make her proposal, and that her father might be led to listen to it favourably. But prayers are not always soon answered. Her father listened to her plan in silence, then called out to his wife: "Here is a fine patroness! Our daughter is going off to Petersburg to speak for us to the Emperor," and he related all the scheme that had been laid before him, with such a throbbing heart, in a tone of amusement.

"She ought to be attending to her work instead of talking nonsense," said the wife; and when poor Prascovia, more mortified at derision than by anger, began to cry bitterly, her mother held out a cloth to her, saying in a half-coaxing tone, "Here, my dear, dust the table for dinner, and then you may set off to Petersburg at your ease."

Still day by day Prascovia returned to the charge, entreating that her scheme might at least be considered, till her father grew displeased, and severely forbade her to mention it again. She abstained; but for three whole years she never failed to add to her daily prayers a petition that his consent might be gained. During this time her mother had a long and serious illness, and Prascovia's care, as both nurse and housewife, gave her father and mother such confidence in her, that they no longer regarded her as a child; and when she again ventured to bring her plan before them, they did not laugh at her, but besought her not to leave them in their declining years to expose herself to danger on so wild a project. She answered by tears, but she could not lay it aside.

Another difficulty was, that without a passport she would have been immediately sent back to Ischim, and so many petitions from her father had been disregarded that there was little chance that any paper sent by him to Tobolsk would be attended to. However, she found one of their fellow-exiles who drew up a request in due form for a passport for her, and after six months more of waiting the answer arrived. She was not herself a prisoner, she could leave Siberia whenever she pleased, and the passport was inclosed for her. Her father, however, seized upon it, and locked it up, declaring that he had only allowed the application to go in the certainty that it would be refused, and that nothing should induce him to let a girl of eighteen depart alone on such a journey.

Prascovia still persevered, and her disappointment worked upon her mother to promise not to prevent her from going, provided her father consented; and at last he yielded. "What shall we do with this

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child ? " he said : " we shall have to let her go." Still he said, " Do you think, poor child, that you can speak to the Emperor as you speak to your father in Siberia ? Sentinels guard every entrance to his palace, and you will never pass the threshold. Poor even to beggary, without clothes or introductions, how could you appear, and who will deign to present you ? " However, Prascovia trusted that the same Providence that had brought her the passport would smooth other difficulties ; she had boundless confidence in the Power to whom she had committed herself, and her own earnest will made obstacles seem as nothing. That her undertaking should not be disobedient was all she desired. And at length the consent was won, and the 8th of September fixed for her day of departure.

When the first sunbeam shone into the room, there was, according to the beautiful old Russian custom, a short, solemn silence, for private prayer for the traveller. Then, after a few words, also customary, of indifferent conversation, there was a last embrace, and Prascovia, kneeling down, received her parents' blessing, rose up, and set her face upon her way—a girl of nineteen, with a single rouble in her pocket, to walk through vast expanses of forest, and make her way to the presence of her sovereign.

Two poor exiles did their utmost for her by escorting her as far as they were allowed to go from Ischim, and they did not leave her till she had joined a party of girls on their way to one of the villages she had to pass. Once they had a fright from some half-tipsy lads ; but they shook them off, and reached the village, where Prascovia was known and hospitably lodged for the night. She was much tired in the morning, and when she first set forth on her way, the sense of terror at her loneliness was almost too much for her, till she thought of the angel who succoured Hagar, and took courage; but she had mistaken the road, and by and by found herself at the last village she had passed the night before. Indeed, she often lost her way; and when she asked the road to Petersburg, she was only laughed at. She knew the names of no nearer places in the way, but fancied that the sacred town of Kief, where the Russian power had first begun, was on the route; so, if people did not know which was the road to Petersburg, she would ask for Kief. One day, when she came to a place where three roads branched off, she asked some travellers in a carriage that passed her, which of them led to Kief. "Whichever you please," they answered, laughing; "one leads as much as the other to Kief, Paris, or Rome." She chose the middle one, which was fortunately the right, but she was never able to give any exact account of the course she had taken, for she confused the names of the villages she passed, and only remembered certain incidents that had impressed themselves on her memory. In the lesser hamlets she was usually kindly received in the first cottage where she asked for shelter; but in larger places, with houses of a superior order, she was often treated as a suspicious-looking vagabond. For instance, when not far from a place called Kamouicheff, she was caught in a furious storm at the end of a long day's march. She hurried on in hopes of reaching the nearest houses; but a tree was blown down just before her, and she thought it safer to hasten into a thicket, the close bushes of which sheltered her a little against the wind. Darkness came on before the storm abated enough for her to venture out, and there she stayed, without daring to move, though the rain at length made its way through the branches, and soaked her to the skin. At dawn, she dragged

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herself to the road, and was there offered a place in a cart driven by a peasant, who set her down in the middle of the village at about eight o'clock in the morning. She fell down while getting out, and her clothes were not only wet through with the night's drenching, but covered with mire ; she was spent with cold and hunger, and she felt herself such a deplorable object, that the neatness of the houses filled her with alarm. She, however, ventured to approach an open window, where she saw a woman shelling peas, and begged to be allowed to rest and dry herself, but the woman suryeyed her scornfully, and ordered her off ; and she met with no better welcome at any other house. At one, where she sat down at the door, the mistress drove her off, saying that she harboured neither thieves nor vagabonds. "At least," thought the poor wanderer, "they cannot hunt me from the church ; " but she found the door locked, and when she sat down on its stone steps, the village boys came round her, hooting at her, and calling her a thief and runaway ; and thus she remained for two whole hours, ready to die with cold and hunger, but inwardly praying for strength to bear this terrible trial.

At last, however, a kinder woman came up through the rude little mob, and spoke to her in a gentle manner. Prascovia told what a terrible night she had spent in the wood, and the starost, or village magistrate, examined her passport, and found that it answered for her character. The good woman offered to take her home, but on trying to rise, she found her limbs so stiff that she could not move ; she had lost one of her shoes, and her feet were terribly swollen ; indeed, she never entirely recovered from the effects of that dreadful night of exposure. The villagers were shocked at their own inhospitality ;

they fetched a cart and lodged her safely with the good woman, with whom she remained several days, and when she was again able to proceed, one of the villagers gave her a pair of boots. She was often obliged to rest for a day or two, according to the state of her strength, the weather, or the reception she met with, and she always endeavoured to requite the hospitality she received by little services, such as sweeping, washing, or sewing for her hosts. She found it wiser not to begin by telling her story, or people took her for an impostor; she generally began by begging for a morsel of food; then, if she met with a kind answer, she would talk of her weariness and obtain leave to rest, and when she was a little more at home with the people of the house, would tell them her story; and when, if nothing else would do, she was in urgent need, the sight of her passport secured attention to her from the petty authorities, since she was there described as the daughter of a captain in the army. But she always said that she did not, comparatively, often meet with rebuffs, whilst the acts of kindness she had received were beyond counting. "People fancy," she used afterwards to say, "that my journey was most disastrous, because I tell the troubles and adventures that befell me, and pass over the kind welcomes I received, because nobody cares to hear them."

Winter began to come on, and an eight days' snowstorm forced her to stop till it was over; but when she wanted to set off again, the peasants declared that to travel on foot alone in the snow would be certain death even to the strongest men, for the wind raises the drifts, and makes the way undistinguishable, and they detained her till the arrival of a convoy of sledges, which were taking provisions to Ekatherinenburg for the Christmas feasts. The drivers, on learning her story, offered her a seat in a sledge, but her garments were not adapted for winter travelling, and though they covered her with one of the wrappers of their goods, on the fourth day, when they arrived at the kharstina, or solitary posting-station, the intense cold had so affected her, that she was obliged to be lifted from the sledge, with one cheek frost-bitten. The good carriers rubbed it with snow, and took every possible care of her; but they said it was impossible to take her on without a sheepskin pelisse, since otherwise her death from the increasing cold was certain. She cried bitterly at the thought of missing this excellent escort, and on the other hand, the people of the kharstina would not keep her. The carriers then agreed to club together to buy her a sheepskin, but none could be had; no one at the station would spare theirs, as they were in a lonely place, and could not easily get another. Though the carriers even offered a sum beyond the cost to the maid of the inn, if she would part with hers, she still refused; but at last an expedient was found. "Let us lend her our pelisses by turns," said one of the carriers. "Or rather, let her always wear mine, and we will change about every verst." To this all agreed; Prascovia was well wrapped up in one of the sheepskin pelisses, whose owner rolled himself in the wrapper, curled his feet under him, and sung at the top of his lungs. Every verst-stone there was a shifting of sheepskins, and there was much merriment over the changes, while all the way Prascovia's silent prayers arose, that these kind men's health might suffer no injury from the cold to which they thus exposed themselves.

At the inn at which they put up at Ekatherinenburg, the hostess told Prascovia the names of the most charitable persons in the town, and so especially praised a certain Madame Milin, that Prascovia resolved to apply to her the next day for advice how to proceed farther. First, as it was Sunday, however, she went to church. Her worn travelling dress, as well as her fervent devotion, attracted attention, and as she came out, a lady asked her who she was. Prascovia gave her name, and further requested to be directed where to find Madame Milin, whose benevolence was everywhere talked of. "I am afraid," said the lady, "that this Madame Milin's beneficence is a good deal exaggerated; but come with me, and I will take care of you."

Prascovia did not much like this way of speaking; but the stranger pointed to Madame Milin's door, saying that if she were rejected there, she must return to her. Without answering, Prascovia asked the servants whether Madame Milin were at home, and only when they looked at their mistress in amazement, did she discover that she had been talking to Madame Milin herself all the time.

This good lady kept her as a guest all the rest of the winter, and strove to remedy the effects of the severe cold she had caught on the night of the tempest. At the same time, she taught Prascovia many of the common matters of education becoming her station. Captain Lopouloff and his wife had been either afraid to teach their daughter anything that would recall their former condition in life, or else had become too dispirited and indifferent for the exertion, and Prascovia had so entirely forgotten all she had known before her father's banishment, that she had to learn to read and write over again. She could never speak of Madame Milin's kindness without tears, but the comfort and ease in which she now lived, made her all the more distressed at the thought of her parents toiling alone among the privations of their snowy wilderness. Madame Milin, however, would not allow her to leave Ekatherinenburg till the spring, and then took a place for her in a barge upon the river Khama, a confluent of the Volga; and put her under the care of a man who was going to Nishni Novgorod, with a cargo of iron and salt.

Unfortunately this person fell sick, and was obliged to be left behind at a little village on the banks of the Khama, and Prascovia was again left unprotected. Madame Milin, trusting to the person to whom she had confided her young friend, to forward her on from Novgorod, had given her no introductions to any one there, nor any directions how to proceed, and the poor girl was thus again cast upon the world alone, though, thanks to her kind friend, with rather more both in her purse and in her bundle than when she had left Ischim; but, on the other hand, with a far clearer knowledge of the difficulties that lay before her, and a much greater dread of cities.

The bargemen set her ashore at the foot of a bridge at the usual landing-place. She saw a church on a rising ground before her, and, according to her usual custom, she went up to pray there before going to seek a lodging. The building was empty, but behind a grating she heard the voices of women at their evening devotions. It was a nunnery, and these female tones refreshed and encouraged her. "If God grants my prayers," she thought, "I shall hide myself under such a veil as theirs, for I shall have nothing to do but to thank and praise Him." After the service, she lingered near the convent, dreading to expose herself to the rude remarks she might meet at an inn, and at last, reproaching herself for this failure in her trust, she returned into the church to renew her prayers for faith and courage. One of the nuns who had remained there told her it was time to

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close the doors, and Prascovia ventured to tell her of her repugnance to enter an inn alone, and to beg for a night's shelter in the convent. The sister replied that they did not receive travellers, but that the abbess might give her some assistance. Prascovia showed her purse, and explained that the kind friends at Ekatherinenburg had placed her above want, and that all she needed was a night's lodging; and the nun, pleased with her manner, took her to the abbess. Her artless story, supported by her passport, and by Madame Milin's letters, filled the good sisterhood with excitement and delight; the abbess made her sleep in her own room, and insisted on her remaining a few days to rest. Before those few days were over, Prascovia was seized with so dangerous an illness that the physicians themselves despaired of her life; but even at the worst she never gave herself up. "I do not believe my hour is come," she said. "I hope God will allow me to finish my work." And she did recover, though so slowly that all the summer passed by before she could continue her journey, and then she was too weak for rough posting vehicles, and could only wait among the nuns for the roads to be fit for sledges.

At last she set off again for Moscow in a covered sledge, with a letter from the abbess to a lady, who sent her on again to Petersburg, under the care of a merchant, with a letter to the Princess de T——, and thus at length she arrived at the end of her journey, eighteen months after she had set off from Ischim with her rouble and her staff. The merchant took her to his own house, but before he had found out the Princess, he was obliged to go to Riga, and his wife, though courteous and hospitable, did not exert herself to forward the cause of her guest. She tried to find one of the ladies to whom she had been

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recommended, but the house was on the other side of the Neva, and as it was now February, the ice was in so unsafe a state that no one was allowed to pass. A visitor at the merchant's advised her to get a petition to the Senate drawn up, begging for a revision of her father's trial, and offered to get it drawn up for her. Accordingly, day after day, for a whole fortnight, did the poor girl stand on the steps of the Senate-house, holding out her petition to every one whom she fancied to be a senator, and being sometimes roughly spoken to, sometimes waved aside, sometimes offered a small coin as a beggar, but never attended to. Holy Week came on, and Prascovia's devotions and supplications were addressed entirely to her God. On Easter-day, that day of universal joy, she was unusually hopeful; she went out with her hostess in the carriage, and told her that she felt a certainty that another time she would meet with success.

"I would trouble myself no more with senates and senators," said the lady. "It is just as well worth while as it would be to offer your petition to yonder iron man," pointing to the famous statue of Peter the Great.

"Well," said Prascovia, "God is Almighty, and if He would, He could make that iron man stoop and take up my petition."

The lady laughed carelessly; but as they were looking at the statue, she observed that the bridge of boats over the Neva was restored, and offered to take Prascovia at once to leave her letter with Mde. de L——. They found this lady at home, and already prepared to expect her; she received her most kindly, and looked at the petition, which she found so ignorantly framed and addressed, that it was no wonder that it had not been attended to.

She said that she had a relation high in office in the Senate who could have helped Prascovia, but that unfortunately they were not on good terms.

Easter-day, however, is the happy occasion when, in the Greek Church, all reconciliations are made. Families make a point of meeting with the glorious greeting, "Christ is risen," and the response, "He is risen indeed"; and the kiss exchanged at these glad tidings seals general pardon for all the bickerings of the year. And while Prascovia was at dinner with her friends, this very gentleman came in, with the accustomed words, and, without further delay, she was introduced to him, and her circumstances explained. He took great interest in her, but assured her that applications to the Senate were useless; for even if she should prevail to have the trial revised, it would be a tedious and protracted affair, and very uncertain; so that it would be far better to trust to the kind disposition of the Czar Alexander himself.

Prascovia went back to the merchant's greatly encouraged, and declaring that, after all, she owed something to the statue of Peter the Great, for but for him they might not have observed that the Neva was open. The merchant himself now returned from Riga, and was concerned at finding her affairs no forwarder. He took her at once to the Princess de T——, a very old lady, who received her kindly, and let her remain in her house; but it was full of grand company and card-playing, and the Princess herself was so aged and infirm that she, as well as all her guests, forgot all about the young stranger, who, with a heart pining with hope deferred, meekly moved about the house—finding that every opening of promise led only to disappointment. Still she recollected that she had been advised to present a request to M. V——, one of the Secretaries of the

Empress Mary, widow of the last, and mother of the present Czar. With this, she went to his house. He had heard of her, but fancying hers a common case of poverty, had put out fifty roubles to be given to her. He was not at home when she called; but his wife saw her, was delighted with her, drew from her the whole history of her perseverance in her father's cause, and kept her to see M. V——. He, too, was warmly interested, and going at once to the Empress-mother, who was one of the most gentle and charitable women in the world, he brought back her orders that she should be presented to the Empress that very evening.

The Empress Mary was a tender-hearted woman of the simplest manners. She received Prascovia in her private room, and listened most kindly to her story; then praised her self-devotion and filial love, and promised to speak in her behalf to the Emperor—giving her 300 roubles for her present needs. Prascovia was so much overcome by her kindness that when afterwards Mme. V—— asked how she had sped in her interview, she could only weep for gladness.

Two days after, the Empress-mother herself took her to a private audience of the Emperor himself and his wife, the Empress Elizabeth. No particulars are given of this meeting, except that Prascovia was most graciously received, and that she came away with a gift of 5,000 roubles, and a promise that her father's trial should be at once revised.

And now all the persons who had scarcely attended to Prascovia vied with each other in making much of her; they admired her face, found out that she had the stamp of high birth, and invited her to their drawing-rooms. She was as quiet and unmoved as ever; she never thought of herself, nor of the effect she produced, but went on in her simplicity, enjoying all that was kindly meant. Two ladies took her to see the State apartments of the Imperial palace. When they pointed to the throne, she stopped short, exclaiming, "Is that the throne? Then that is what I dreaded so much in Siberia!" And as all her past hopes and fears, her dangers and terrors, rushed on her, she clasped her hands, and exclaiming, "The Emperor's throne!" she almost fainted. Then she begged leave to draw near, and, kneeling down, she kissed the steps, of which she had so often dreamt as the term of her labours, and she exclaimed aloud, "Father, father! see whither the Divine Power has led me! My God, bless this throne —bless him who sits on it—make him as happy as he is making me!" The ladies could hardly get her away from it, and she was so much exhausted by the strength of her feelings that she could not continue her course of sight-seeing all that day.

She did not forget the two fellow-exiles who had been so kind to her; she mentioned them to every one, but was always advised not to encumber her suit for her father by mentioning them. However, when, after some delay, she received notice that a ukase had been issued for her father's pardon, and was further told that His Majesty wished to know if she had anything to ask for herself, she replied that he would overwhelm her with his favours if he would extend the same mercy that he had granted to her father to these two poor old banished gentlemen; and the Emperor, struck by this absence of all selfishness, readily pardoned them for their offence, which had been of a political nature, and many years old.

Prascovia had always intended to dedicate herself as a nun, believing that this would be her fullest thank offering for her father's pardon, and her heart was drawn towards the convent at Nishni, where she had been so tenderly nursed during her illness. First, however, she went to Kief, the place where the first Christian teaching in Russia had begun, and where the tombs of St. Olga, the pious queen, and Vladimir, the destroyer of idols, were objects of pilgrimage. There she took the monastic vows, a step which seems surprising in so dutiful a daughter, without her parents' consent; but she seems to have thought that only thus could her thankfulness be evinced, and to have supposed herself fulfilling the vows she had made in her distress. From Kief, she returned to Nishni, where she hoped to meet her parents. She had reckoned that about the time of her arrival they might be on their way back from Siberia, and as soon as she met the abbess, she eagerly asked if there were no tidings of them. "Excellent tidings," said the abbess. "I will tell you in my rooms." Prascovia followed her in silence, until they reached the reception-room, and there stood her father and mother! Their first impulse on seeing the daughter who had done so much for them, was to fall on their knees; but she cried out with dismay, and herself kneeling, exclaimed, "What are you doing? It is God, God only, who worked for us. Thanks be to His providence for the wonders He has wrought in our favour."

For one week the parents and child were happy together; but then Captain Lopouloff and his wife were forced to proceed on their journey. The rest of Prascovia's life was one long decline, her health had been fatally injured by the sufferings that she had undergone; and though she lived some years, and saw her parents again, she was gently fading away all the time. She made one visit to Petersburg, and one of those who saw her there described her as having a fine oval face, extremely black eyes, an open brow, and a remarkable calmness of expression, though with a melancholy smile. It is curious that Scott has made this open-browed serenity of expression a characteristic of his Jeanie Deans.

Prascovia's illness ended suddenly on the 9th of December, 1809. She had been in church on that same morning, and was lying on her bed, with the sisters talking round her, when they observed that they were tiring her. They went away for one of their hours of prayer, leaving one, who began to chant the devotions aloud, but Prascovia begged her to read instead of singing, as the voice disturbed her prayers. Still she did not complain, and they left her at night without alarm, but in the morning they found her in her last long sleep, her hands forming the sign of the cross.

THE CHILDREN OF BLENTARN GHYLL

1807

Blentarn Ghyll is the name of a little narrow gorge in those Westmoreland mountains called Langdale Pikes, at whose feet lie the lovely green vale and lake of Grasmere. The lake is fed by mountain streamlets, called in the north becks. One of these becks comes down another beautiful valley called Easedale, sheltered by mountains and green with grass, as smooth and soft as on a lawn, from being cropped short by the sheep, which can be turned out here earlier in the spring than on the other mountain-sides. At one end, Easedale opens on the village of Grasmere, at the other is a steep ascent, leading to a bare stony ravine, shut in on all sides by high mountains, and

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with no outlet except the rough descent into Easedale, and likewise a dangerous winding path about six miles over the mountains to Langdale Head. This lonely ravine is called Far Easedale, and at the upper end there formerly stood a cottage named Blentarn Ghyll. Ghyll means a cleft worn in the rock by water; and just above the cottage there is such a cleft, opening from a basin in the rock that must once have been a tarn, or mountain lakelet, but the pool is now dry, and for want of the living eye of sparkling water, it is termed Blentarn or Blind pool.

The cottage was the dwelling of an honest old soldier named George Green, who had taken the little mountain farm, and married an active, bustling woman, who kept her home in great order, and regularly sent her children, tidily dressed, to school at Grasmere whenever the weather did not make the long wild mountain walk impossible for them.

It was in the winter of the year 1807 that there was an auction of furniture at a farm-house at Langdale Head. These sales are great occasions among the people of these hills; every one attends them for a considerable distance round, and there is much friendly hospitality, much business of all sorts transacted, and many meetings of old friends, who scarcely ever see each other at other times. To this gathering George and Sarah Green set off early in the forenoon of a bright winter day, leaving their cottage and six little ones in the charge of the eldest sister, a girl of nine years old, named Agnes, for they had neither indoor nor outdoor servant, and no neighbour nearer than Grasmere.

Little Agnes was, however, a remarkably steady and careful child, and all went well through the day, but towards night the mist settled down heavily upon the hills, and the heavy sighing in the air told that a storm was working up; the children watched anxiously for their parents, but the fog cut off their view, flakes of snow began to fall, and darkness closed in early on them.

Agnes gave the others their supper of milk and oatmeal porridge, and they sat down waiting and watching, and fancying they heard sounds in the hills; but the clock struck one hour after another, and no step was on the threshold, no hand at the latch, no voice at the door, only the white silent flakes fell thicker and thicker, and began to close up the door, and come in white clinging wreaths through the crevices of the windows. Agnes tried to cheer the others up, but there was a dread on them all, and they could not bear to move away from the peat fire on the hearth, round which they were nestled. She put the two youngest, who were twins, to bed in their cradle, and sat on with the others, two boys and another girl, named Catherine, till the clock struck twelve, when she heard them one by one say their prayers, and doing the same herself, lay down to rest, trusting to her Heavenly Father's care.

The morning came, and no father and mother; only the snow falling thicker than ever, and almost blocking them in; but still Agnes did not lose hope; she thought her father and mother might have taken shelter at night in some *bield*, as she would have termed a sheepfold, or that the snow might have prevented them from setting out at all, and that they might come home by Grasmere in the morning. She cheered herself up, and dressed the others, made them say their prayers, and gave them their breakfast, recollecting as she saw the lessening stores that her mother must know how little was provided for them, and be as anxious to get home as they were to see her there. She longed to go down to Grasmere to inquire; but the communication was entirely cut off by the snow, for the beck was, in the winter, too wide for a child to leap, and too rapid to be waded, and the crazy wooden bridge that crossed it had so large a hole in it, that, when concealed with snow, it was not safe to attempt the passage. She said afterwards that she could not help being terrified at the loneliness and desolateness, but that she recollected that at least if she could not get out, no bad men could get in to hurt them; and she set herself resolutely to comfort and help the lesser creatures who depended on her. She thought over all that could be done for the present, and first wound up the clock, a friend that she could not allow to be silent; next she took all the remaining milk and scalded it, to prevent it turning sour; then she looked into the meal chest, and made some porridge for breakfast, but the store was so low that she was forced to put all except the babies upon short allowance; but to reconcile the others to this, she made cakes of a small hoard of flour, and baked them on the hearth. It was snowing so fast that she feared that the way to the peat stack would be blocked up, and therefore her next work was, with the help of the two boys, to pull down as much fuel as would last for a week, and carry it indoors; and she examined the potatoes laid up in bracken leaves, but fancying that if she brought them in, the warmth of the cottage would spoil them, she only took enough for a single meal. Milking the cow was the next office performed by this orderly little maid, but the poor thing was half starved and had little to give. Agnes saw that more hay must be given to her, and calling the boys, scrambled with them into the loft, and began to pull down the hay; but this was severe work for such

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young children, and darkness came on in the midst, frightening the two little fellows, so that it required all the sister's steady resolution and perseverance to finish supplying the poor cow with even that night's supper and bed. Supper-time came, and after it the motherly child undressed the twins and found voice to sing them to sleep, after which she joined the huddle of the other three, nestled on the hearth, and hour after hour they listened for the dear voices, till they fancied they heard sounds on the howling blast, held their breath, and then as it died away, were conscious of the lull. So fierce was the snow-drift that Agnes had to guard the door and window from admitting long wreaths of it, and protect the fire from being put out as it came hissing down the chimney. Again her watch lasted till midnight, and no parents, no help came; again she went to bed, and awoke to find the snow falling thicker than ever, and hope failing within her. Her fond, active mother, her strong, brave father, a noted climber, would surely long ago have found the way home to their children had all been well with them. Agnes described herself as getting through this third lonely day by keeping her little flock together on the hearth, and making them say their prayers aloud by turns.

By the following morning the snow was over, and the wind had changed, so sweeping away the drifts, that though the treacherous bridge might not be attempted, a low stone wall had been exposed, which these little mountaineers knew would serve as a guide into Grasmere, by a circuit, which would avoid crossing the brook. It would be needful to force some gaps, that is, to push down the loose stones of the uncemented stone walls that divided the fields, and the little boys came with Agnes to help her in this as far as the ridge of the hill; but the way was long and unsafe for small children, and Agnes sent them back, while she made her way alone, a frail little being in the vast slopes of snow, to the house nearest in Grasmere.

She knocked at the door and was made kindly welcome, but no sooner did she ask for her father and mother than smiles turned to looks of pity and dismay. In half-an-hour the news that George and Sarah Green were missing had spread through the village, and sixty strong men had met at Kirktown, the hamlet close to the parish church, to seek for them. The last that was known of them was, that after the auction, some of their friends had advised them not to try the dangerous path so late; but when they had gone no one knew. Some of the people of Langdale likewise had heard wild shrieks at midnight on the night after the sale, but had fancied them merely the moans of the wind.

One day after another the search continued, but still in vain. The neighbours patiently gave up their work day after day to turn over the deep snow around the path from Langdale, but for three—or some say five—days no trace of them was found. At last dogs were used, and guided the seekers far away from the path, until a loud shout from the top of a steep precipice told that the lost was found. There lay Sarah Green, wrapped in her husband's greatcoat, of course quite dead, and at the foot of the rock his body was found, in a posture that seemed to show that he had been killed by the fall without a struggle. The neighbours thought that the mist and snow must have bewildered them till they had wandered thus far in the darkness, and that George had been making a few steps forward to make out the road when the fall took place, but that his wife had very possibly been unconscious of his fall, and stood still where he had left her, uttering those sad cries that had been so little regarded at Langdale, until she was unable to move and was benumbed by the sleep of cold. Those who knew them best, thought that the poor woman's grief and terror for her lonely little ones had probably so overpowered her as to disturb her husband's coolness and presence of mind, and that if he had been alone, he would probably have easily saved himself. The brave little girl keeping her patient watch and guard over the five younger ones, and setting out on her lonely way through the snow, must have had more of the spirit of her soldier-father than of her mother. It was to Dorothy Wordsworth, the sister of the poet, that little Agnes was persuaded to tell the history of this calm, resolute, trustful waiting time, which, simple as it is, we think our readers will own as truly worthy to be counted among Golden Deeds. The father and mother were buried on a lovely spring day at St. Oswald's Churchyard at Kirktown, and Wordsworth wrote—

"Now do these sternly featured hills
Look gently on this grave,
And quiet now the depths of air
As sea without a wave.

"But deeper lies the heart of peace,
In quiet more profound;
The heart of quietness is here,
Within this churchyard bound.

"And from all agony of mind
It keeps them safe, and far
From fear, and grief, and from all need
Of sun or guiding star."

After the funeral the farm folk of the neighbourhood were all pressing forward to beg to adopt one or other of the little orphans. The twins were kept together, Catherine was taken by the Wordsworth family, Agnes and her brothers found separate but comfortable homes among their parents' friends. Help came pouring in. Queen Charlotte and her daughters were greatly touched by the mountain child's tender motherliness, and sent a handsome donation for the benefit of the orphans, and so many subscriptions were offered that at last Miss Wordsworth declined receiving any more, lest the children should be injured by having too much wealth for the station to which they were growing up.

AGOSTINA OF ZARAGOZA

1808

One of the most unjustifiable acts of Napoleon's grasping policy was the manner in which he entrapped the poor, foolish, weak Spanish royal family into his power, and then kept them in captivity, and gave their kingdom to his brother Joseph. The whole Spanish people were roused to resistance by this atrocious transfer, and the whole of the peasantry rose as one man to repel this shameful aggression. A long course of bad government had done much to destroy the vigour of the nation, and as soldiers in the open field they were utterly worthless; but still there were high qualities of patience and perseverance among them, and these were never more fully shown than in their defence of Zaragoza, the ancient capital of the kingdom of Aragon.

The city stands in an open plain, covered with olive-grounds, and closed in by high mountains. About a mile to the south-west of the city was some high ground called the Torrero, upon which stood a convent, and close beside the city flowed the Ebro, crossed by two bridges, one of which was made of wood, and said to be the most beautiful specimen of the kind of fabric in Europe. The water is of a dirty red, but grows clear when it has stood long enough, and is then excellent to drink. There were no regular fortifications, only a brick wall, ten or twelve feet high, and three feet thick, and often encroached upon by houses. Part of it was, however, of old Roman workmanship, having been built under Augustus, by whom the town was called Cæsarea Augusta, a name since corrupted into Zaragoza (both z's pronounced as softly as possible). Four of the twelve gates were in this old wall, which was so well built as to put to shame all the modern buildings and their bad bricks. These were the material of even the churches and convents, all alike with the houses, and so bad was the construction that there were cracks in most of the buildings from top to bottom. The houses were generally three storeys high, the streets very narrow and crooked, except one wide and long one, called sometimes the Calle Santa, sometimes the Cozo. The inhabitants appeared, like most Spaniards since the blight of Philip II.'s policy had fallen on them, dull, apathetic beings, too proud and indolent for exertion, the men smoking cigaritos at their doors, the women only coming out with black silk mantillas over their heads to go to church. The French on first seizing it, with the rest of Spain, thought it the dullest place they had ever yet entered, and greatly despised the inhabitants.

General Lefebvre Desnouettes was sent to quiet the insurrection against the French in Aragon; and on the 13th and 14th of June, 1808, he easily routed the bodies of Spaniards who tried to oppose him. The flying Spanish troops were pursued into Zaragoza by the French cavalry, but here the inhabitants were able from their houses to drive back the enemy.

Don Jose Palafox, a Spanish nobleman, who had been equerry to the King, took the command of the garrison, who were only 220 soldiers, and endeavoured to arm the inhabitants, about 60,000 in number, and all full of the most determined spirit of resistance to the invaders. He had only sixteen cannon and a few muskets, but fowling-pieces were collected, and pikes were forged by all the smiths in the town.

The siege began on the 27th of June. The French army was in considerable force, and had a great supply of mortars and battering cannon; such as could by their shells and shot rend the poor brick city from end to end. The Torrero quickly fell into their hands, and from that height there was a constant discharge of those terrible shells and grenades that burst in pieces where they fall, and carry destruction everywhere. Not one building within the city could withstand them, and they were fired, not at the walls, but into the town. All that could be done was to place beams slanting against the houses, so that there might be a shelter under them from the shells. The awnings that sheltered the windows from the summer sun were taken down, sewn up into sacks, and filled with earth, then piled up before the gates, with a deep trench dug before them; the houses on the walls were pulled down, and every effort made to strengthen the defences, the whole of the lately quiet, lazy population toiling earnestly together, in the midst of the deadly shower that was always falling from the Torrero, and striking down numbers as they worked.

The same spirit animated every one. The Countess Burita, a beautiful young lady, formed the women into an organized company for carrying wine, water, and food to the soldiers on guard, and relieving the wounded, and throughout the whole siege her courage and perseverance never failed; she was continually seen in the places most exposed to the enemy's fire, bringing help and refreshment wherever she appeared among the hard-pressed warriors. The nuns became nurses to the sick and wounded, and made cartridges, which were carried to the defenders by the children of the place. The monks attended the sick and dying, or else bore arms, feeling that this—the cause of their country, their King, and their faith—had become to them a holy war. Thus men, women, and children alike seemed full of the same loyal spirit; but some traitor must have been among them, for on the night of the 28th, the powder magazine in the centre of the town was blown up, destroying fourteen houses and killing 200 people. At the same time, evidently prepared to profit by the confusion thus caused, the French appeared before three of the gates, and a dreadful fire began from the Torrero, shells bursting everywhere among the citizens, who were striving in the dark to dig their friends out of the ruined houses.

The worst of the attack was at the gate called Portillo, and lasted the whole day. The sand-bag defence was frequently destroyed by the fire, and as often renewed under this dreadful shot by the undaunted Spaniards. So dreadful was the carnage, that at one moment every man of the defenders lay dead. At that moment one of the women who were carrying refreshments came up. Her name was Agostina Zaragoza; she was a fine-looking woman of two-and-twenty, and was full of a determined spirit. She saw the citizens hesitate to step forward to man the defences where certain death awaited them. Springing forward, she caught the match from the hand of a dead gunner, fired his twenty-six pounder, and seating herself on it, declared it her charge for the rest of the siege. And she kept her word. She was the heroine of the siege where all were heroines. She is generally called the Maid of Zaragoza, but she

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seems to have been the widow of one of the artillerymen, who was here killed, and that she continued to serve his gun—not solely as a patriot, but because she thus obtained a right to provisions for her little children, who otherwise might have starved in the famine that began to prevail. If this lessens the romance, it seems to us to add to the beauty and womanliness of Agostina's character, that for the sake of her children she should have run into the hottest of the peril, and taken up the task in which her husband had died.

Her readiness in that critical moment saved the Portillo for that time, but the attacks were renewed again and again with equal fury and fearful bloodshed. The French general had fancied that he could easily take such an unfortified place, and finding it so difficult, had lost his temper, and was thus throwing away his men's lives; but after several such failures, he began to invest the city regularly. Gunpowder was failing the besieged until they supplied its place by wonderful ingenuity. All the sulphur in the place was collected, nitre was obtained by washing it out of the soil of the streets, and charcoal by charring the stalks of the very large variety of hemp that grows in that part of Spain. At the end of forty-six days the city was entirely surrounded, provisions were falling short, and there was not a single place safe from the shot and shell. On the 2nd of August, a hospital caught fire, and the courage of the women was again shown by their exertions in carrying out the sick and wounded from the flames in spite of the continued shot from the enemy's batteries; indeed, throughout the siege the number of women and boys who were killed was quite as great in proportion as that of men; the only difficulty was to keep them from running needlessly into danger.

On the 4th of August, the French opened a battery within pistol-shot of the gate called after the great convent of St. Engracia. The mud walls were levelled at the first discharge, and after a deadly struggle the besiegers forced their way into the convent, and before the end of the day had gained all that side of the city, up to the main central street, the Cozo. General Lefebvre thought all was now over with his enemies, and summoned Palafox to surrender, in a note containing only these words—"Head-quarters, St. Engracia. Capitulation." The answer he received was equally brief—"Head-quarters, Zaragoza. War to the knife."

There they were! A street about as wide as Pall-Mall was all that lay between besiegers and besieged, to whom every frail brick house had become a fortress, while the openings of the narrow cross streets were piled up with sand-bags to form batteries. Soon the space was heaped with dead bodies, either killed on the spot or thrown from the windows, and this was enough to breed a pestilence among the survivors. The French let them lie, knowing that such a disease would be the surest destruction to the garrison, and they fired on the Spaniards whenever they ventured out to bury them. Upon this Palafox devised tying ropes to his French prisoners, and driving them out to bring in the corpses for burial. The enemy would not fire on their own countrymen, and thus this danger was lessened, although not entirely removed, and sickness as well as famine was added to the misery of the brave Aragonese. The manufactory of powder, too, could no longer be carried on, but happily Don Francisco, the brother of Palafox, was able to make his way into the city with 3,000 men, and a convoy of arms and ammunition. Padre Santiago Sass, the curate of one of the parishes of Zaragoza, showed himself one of the bravest of all the brave, fighting at every hazardous point, and at other times moving about among the sick and dying to give them the last rites of the Church. No one's heart failed in that eleven days of one continual battle from house to house, from room to room, when the nights were times of more dreadful conflict than the days. Often under cover of the darkness, a party would rush across to seize a battery; and once a Spaniard made his way under cover of the corpses, which filled the whole space between the combatants, and fastened a rope to one of the French guns. It had almost been dragged across the street, and was only lost by the breaking of the rope.

On the 8th of August, the Spaniards agreed that if they could not hold their ground in the city, they must retire across the Ebro, break down the bridge, and defend the suburbs as they had defended the streets. Only an eighth part of their city now remained to them; and on the night of the 13th the enemy's fire was more destructive and constant than ever. The great convent of St. Engracia was blown up, the whole of the French part of the city glared with flaming houses, the climax of the horrors of the siege seemed to be come! But the reports of the batteries gradually ceased, and, with the early morning light, the garrison beheld the road to Pamplona filled with French troops in full retreat.

In effect, intelligence had been received of reverses to the invaders, and of extended movements among the Spaniards, which had led the French to decide on quitting Zaragoza ere these desperate defenders should be reinforced by the army which was collecting to relieve them.

Their fortitude had won the day. The carnage had ended, and it remained for them to clear their streets from the remains of the deadly strife, and to give thanks for their deliverance. Agostina, in testimony of her courage, was to receive for life the pay of an

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artilleryman, and to wear a little shield of honour embroidered on her sleeve.

So ended the wonderful siege of Zaragoza. It is sad to know that when the French forces came in full numbers into Spain, the brave town shared the fate of the rest of the country. But the resistance had not been in vain ; it had raised a feeling for the gallant Spaniards throughout Europe, and inspired a trust in their constancy which contributed to bring them that aid from England by which their country was, after six years, finally freed from the French usurpation.

CASAL NOVO

1811

There is something exceedingly interesting in knowing what a brave and generous man, who had never flinched from any danger, looked back upon in his last days as the one Golden Deed of his life ; and therefore among the many noble and spirited actions during the war by which the British arms chased the usurping French out of the Peninsula, that one is selected of which the doer spoke thus, forty-seven years later, when he thought himself upon his death-bed.

" As I lie here and think of my past life," said Sir William Napier, " I feel small—very small indeed. I try to remember if I have done any good, but the evil far overbalances it. We shall all be weighed in the balance, and found wanting. In the eye of the great good God, earthly goodness can have no positive existence, yet He sees and makes allowances for us all, giving more credit for good and less blame for evil than our fellow-creatures' harsh judging would have done. Men should strive after those priceless virtues of patience, wisdom, charity, self-sacrifice. In looking back on my life, it would be a comfort to me now if I could remember to have done a perfectly self-sacrificing act—if I could think I had been ready and willing at any moment to lay down my life for another person's good. I try to remember, but I can't remember that I ever did. I have often run into danger, and exposed myself to pain sometimes, to save others. Yes, I have done that! but there was always a springing hope, a sort of conviction that I should escape; and that being so, away flies the merit. The nearest thing I ever did to absolute self-sacrifice was at Casal Novo, when I received in my back the ball that lies there still."

It was in the year 1811, when Wellington had entrenched his army on the slopes of Torres Vedras, in Portugal, and there, by his patience and sagacity, had repulsed the French army under Marshal Massena, and was following up his retreat out of the kingdom of Portugal. The English and Portuguese troops used to rise at three in the morning, and march at four; and on the 14th of March, when the army was setting out in the morning twilight, there was a heavy fog covering all the valley in front. Sir William Erskine, the general in command of the Light Division, consisting of the 52nd and 43rd Regiments and the Rifles, all the very flower of the army, was an incompetent man, and fancying the French were in full retreat, ordered his troops to move forward on their march. Some of the officers objected to the rashness of plunging into the mist without precaution; but they were not heeded, and the order to advance was given.

The 52nd moved forward first, in a column of sections, and were to be followed by the Rifles.

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Down the hillside they went, then across a narrow ravine at the bottom, and were mounting the steep road on the other side, when there was a sudden hail of round shot and bullets close upon them. The fog cut off their view, but the bugles continued to sound the advance, and they pushed on through walled fields, the enemy giving way before them, till they gained the ridge of the hill, though with loss of men, and with three captains wounded—one of them George Napier, and another, "Jack Jones," afterwards the hero of the powder-magazine at Ciudad Rodrigo.

The mist suddenly drew up, and displayed to the English troops the hillside covered with dark masses of the blue-clad French soldiers, and in the midst what looked like a red pimple on the ridge, being, in fact, the 52nd in the very middle of Marshal Ney's division—so near the marshal himself, the bravest of the brave, that if they had only been able to see him, they might have made him prisoner by his own bivouac fire.

The rest of the Light Division were put in motion to support them, and Captain William Napier was sent forward, with six companies of his regiment, the 43rd, to aid them on the left. When he came to a round hill, he halted, and left four companies to watch, while, with the other two, he descended into one of the narrow ravines to join the left of the 52nd, whom he heard, though he could not see over the ridge of the hill. Part of the regiment had charged, but not the whole, and thus Napier, coming up into a walled field where he expected to join the left side of the 52nd, found only Captain Dobbs and two men of the 52nd cut off from the rest of their regiment.

The French came gathering fast about them, and cutting off their retreat. The two officers agreed that the boldest course would be the safest, so they called to the two companies behind them to follow, and sprang over the wall in front, meaning to force their way on to the 52nd in front. But only the two 52nd men followed, both the companies of the 43nd held back; and when the two captains had reached a second wall, they found merely this pair of men with them, and a great body of the enemy in front, closing upon them and firing.

The wall gave a moment's protection, and Napier declared he would either save Dobbs or lose his own life by bringing up his two companies. Dobbs entreated him not to attempt it, saying that it was impossible to make two steps from the wall and live. Still, however, Napier, who was stung by the backwardness of his men, dashed back unhurt. His men were crouching under the wall; they had perhaps failed before from being out of breath, from their charge up the hill with their heavy knapsacks on their backs, and still more from the mismanagement of the two lieutenants in command of them, both dull, rude men, tyrannical in their behaviour. One, who was noted for fighting duels, was lying down with his face to the ground, and when the captain called—shouted to him, and bade him remember his uniform, and come on with the men—he did not stir, till, in the extremity of provocation, Napier threw a stone at his head. This made him get up, and scramble over the wall with the men; but on the other side he was wild with terror—eyes staring and hands spread out—and when Napier ordered the men on to where Dobbs was, and ran forward himself, they, under their lieutenant's cowardly leading, all edged away to the right, out of the fire, and again Napier reached his friend alone.

Maddened at the failure, he again sprang back to lead them, but ere he could reach them was struck by a bullet in the spine, and fell. The French most ungenerously continued to fire at him as he lay, and his legs had been paralyzed by the effect of his wound, so that he could only drag himself by his hands towards a heap of stones, behind which he sheltered his head and shoulders. No less than twenty shots struck the heap in the moment before Captain Lloyd with his own company of the 43rd, and some of the 52nd came up, and drove off the enemy. Napier was carried away from this spot, and laid for a time under an olive-tree, while the fight lasted, and the French were driven on from ridge to ridge.

While he was lying there, helpless and exhausted, the grenadier company of Royal Scots were hastening forward, and their captain seeing the wounded man, ran up, and said, "I hope you are not dangerously wounded." He could not speak, but only shook his head; and being asked again, "Can I be of any service to you?" made the same sign; but when Captain Wilson offered him some cold tea and brandy from his flask, he raised his head with a sudden flash of pleasure, and gladly drank two tumblerfuls; then thanked with his eyes and hands. "Heaven protect you," the captain said, and hurried on to overtake his men. Napier was a singularly handsome, noble-looking man, with perfect features, jet-black hair and dark grey eyes, and though now deadly pale, the remarkably beautiful outline of his features, and the sweet and noble expression of his countenance made a great impression on Captain Wilson; but among the numbers of the army, they were never again thrown together, and did not know each other's names.

Napier was thought to be mortally wounded, and his brother Charles, who, half-recovered from a wound, had ridden ninety miles to join the army, met a litter of branches, covered by a blanket, and borne by soldiers. He asked who it was. "Captain Napier, of the 52nd—broken arm." Then came another litter—"Captain Napier, of the 43rd—mortally wounded." Charles Napier looked at his brothers, and passed on to the battle.

The brothers were placed in a house at Condeixa, but, besides their wounds, they, like all the army, suffered terribly from famine, for the French had destroyed everything before them, and the villagers themselves were absolutely starving. A tallow candle that the brothers found in the house was eaten up with the utmost relish! By some chance a loaf of bread came into the hands of Captain Light, a cavalry officer, at the end of a long day's march. Hungry as he was, he would not look at it, but mounted again, and rode twenty miles to Condeixa, over the mountains, and there, fearing a refusal, he flung the loaf into the room where the brothers lay, and rode back to his regiment.

William Napier soon partially recovered, but the bullet could never be extracted, and caused him agonies at intervals throughout the rest of his life. The story of the combat, which he felt as that of his greatest deed, was told by him in his great history of the Peninsular war, but without a hint of his own concern in the matter. Sixteen years after the battle, he met at a dinner party a gentleman, who *à propos* to some mention of handsome men, said that the very handsomest he had ever seen, was one whom he had found lying speechless under an olive-tree at Casal Novo, and had succoured as above described. Sir William Napier sprang from his chair, exclaiming, "My dear Wilson! that was you—that glass of tea and brandy saved my life." He had already become acquainted with Sir John Morillyon Wilson, but till that moment neither had known that the other was his partner in the adventure of the olive-tree.

Assuredly that stony field was a scene to look back on from old age with thankful satisfaction. And no less worthy of honour was, it seems to us, that twenty miles ride by the hungry, weary officer, to bring his wounded comrades the loaf of bread.

THE MAD DOG

1816

Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton was well known in the early part of the last century as one of the most earnest assistants of William Wilberforce in freeing England from the crimes inseparable from slave-holding. It is not, however, of his public career, nor of his deep piety, that we are about to speak, but of one incident in his life, which shows how a really religious and intrepid man will face a sudden and frightful peril for the sake of others. The event took place in the summer of 1816, when he was thirty years old, a capital sportsman and a man of remarkable personal strength and great height (six feet four). He was not as yet a baronet, and was at the time living at Hampstead, and daily riding into Spitalfields to attend to the affairs of a brewery in which he was a partner. During a visit that his wife and children were making at a distance, he had been staying with his brother-in-law, Mr. Hoare, not far from his home. When his servant brought his horse to him there, it was with the intelligence that his dog, Prince, was in a strange state, had killed the cat, almost killed another dog, and had tried to bite some of the servants. Mr. Buxton desired that the creature should be tied up and taken care of, and then rode off to his business in the town; but as he re-

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turned he saw Prince, evidently mad, covered with mud, running furiously and biting at everything.

Mr. Buxton tried to ride him down or drive him into some outhouse, but in vain; and he bit at least a dozen dogs, two boys, and a man, springing at a boy and seizing him by the breast; but this time his master was near enough to knock him down with his whip. He then changed his course, setting off for London, and Mr. Buxton rode by his side, waiting for some opportunity of stopping him, and constantly calling to him; but the poor animal was past attending to the well-known voice, whether coaxing or scolding. He was getting near more closely inhabited places, and considering the fearful damage he might effect, Mr. Buxton thought "if ever there was an occasion that justified a risk of life, this is it," and determined to catch him himself. Prince ran to a garden-door, and Mr. Buxton, leaping from his horse, grasped him by the neck. His struggles were so desperate, that it seemed at first almost impossible—even for so powerful a man—to hold him (he was evidently a large dog); but lifting him up from the ground, he was more easily managed, and Mr. Buxton contrived to ring the bell; but for a long time no one came to his help, and being afraid lest the foam which was pouring from the poor beast's jaws might get into some scratch on his fingers, and be as dangerous as an actual bite, he with great difficulty held Prince with one hand while he worked the other into the glove in his pocket, then changed hands, and thus put on the other glove. At last the gardener opened the door, and asked what he wanted. "I've brought you a mad dog," was the answer; and desiring him to get a strong chain, Mr. Buxton walked into the yard carrying Prince by the neck. He was determined not to kill the dog at once, thinking that if it should prove not to be a case of hydrophobia, it would be a great relief to the persons who had been bitten, and this could only be determined by letting the disease take its course. The gardener was in great terror, but had sense enough to obey directions, and was able to secure the collar round the dog's neck, and fasten the other end of the chain to a tree. Mr. Buxton then walked to the utmost bound of the chain, and with all his force, " which," he says, " was nearly exhausted " by the dog's " frantic struggles," threw the creature as far away from him as he could, and sprang back in time to avoid poor Prince's desperate bound after him, which was followed by " the most fearful yell he ever heard."

All day the unhappy creature, in the misery of that horrible disease to which our faithful companions are sometimes subject, rushed round and round the tree, champing the foam that gushed from his jaws, and when food was thrown to him, snatched at it with fury, but could not eat it. The next day, Mr. Buxton thought the chain in danger of giving way, so renewing his act of bravery, he obtained a stronger chain, and a pitchfork. Between the prongs of this he contrived to get the dog's body, without piercing it, and thus held him pinned down to the ground, while fastening a much larger chain round his neck. On the pitchfork being removed, the dog sprang up and dashed after his master with such violence that the old chain snapped in two. However the frenzy soon spent his strength, and he died only forty-eight hours after the first symptoms of madness had appeared. All the dogs and cats he had bitten were killed by Mr. Buxton himself, knowing that for such a painful business it was wiser to trust to no one's resolution and humanity but his own. The man and boys had the bitten parts cut out and the wounds burnt, and it was hoped that the horrid consequences might be averted from them. He himself expressed great thankfulness both for his own escape and his children's absence from home, and thus wrote to his wife a day or two after :—" What a terrible business it was. You must not scold me for the risk I ran. What I did, I did from a conviction that it was my duty, and I never can think that an over-cautious care of self in circumstances where your risk may preserve others, is so great a virtue as you seem to think it. I do believe if I had shrunk from the danger, and others had suffered in consequence, I should have felt more pain than I should have done had I received a bite."

The perfect coolness and presence of mind shown in the whole adventure are, perhaps, some of its most remarkable features—all being done from no sudden impulse, no daring temper, but from the grave, considerate conviction of the duty of encountering the peril on the part of the person most likely to be able to secure others; and no one who has shuddered at the accounts of the agonies of hydrophobia can fail to own how deadly that peril was.

As a pendant to our countryman's battle with a mad dog, let us see a combat between one of these frenzied creatures and a French weaver, named Simon Albony, a poor man of the town of Rhodez, who was the bread-winner for his aged father. Coming home from his work, in the summer of the year 1830, at about seven o'clock in the evening, he encountered a mad dog, who had already greatly injured several of the townspeople. The creature was advancing slowly, but suddenly turned upon him. Setting his back against a wall, he courageously waited for it, and laid hold of it, though not without being severely bitten. He kept it with a firm hand, shouting that he would not let it go to do further mischief, but that some one must bring along an axe, and break its neck.

Monsieur Portat, a mounted gendarme, heard him, and, hastening to his help, found him struggling with this large hound, holding him by the neck and ears, and constantly asking for an axe to kill him with. The gendarme struck the dog with his stick, but it was not strong enough to kill it ; and another person came up with a heavier club, and gave it a finishing stroke. Albony had received fourteen wounds on his body, thighs, and hands ; but they were immediately operated upon, and at the time his name was brought forward, seven months afterwards, to receive a prize from the Monthyon fund for his heroism, it was hoped that the danger of any bad effects had passed away.

THE MONTHYON PRIZES

1820

The Baron de Monthyon was a French lawyer, greatly devoted to all that could do good to his fellow-creatures. Little of his personal history is known ; but what made his name celebrated was the endowments that he left by his will at his death, in 1820. The following is a translation of certain clauses in his will :—

" 12. I bequeath the sum of 10,000 francs to provide an annual prize for whosoever shall discover any mode of rendering any mechanical art less unhealthy.

" 13. A like sum of 10,000 francs as an annual prize for whosoever shall invent any means of perfecting medical science or surgical art.

" 14. A like sum of 10,000 francs for an annual prize to the poor French person who, in the course of the year, shall have performed the most virtuous action.

"15. A like sum of 10,000 francs for the French person who shall have composed and published in France the book most beneficial to morals."

The two former prizes to be distributed by the Academy of Sciences; the two latter by the French Academy.

Besides these, there were large legacies to hospitals. All the prizes, we believe, continue to be given; but it is with the "Prize of Virtue," as it is called, that we are concerned. The French Academy, which is a society of all the most distinguished literary personages in France, has the office of bestowing this prize, which may either be given entire, or divided into lesser portions among a number of claimants, at the option of the Academy. The recommendation for such a prize must be sent up by the authorities of the town or village where it has taken place, and must contain a full account of the action itself, attested by witnesses, and likewise of the life of the person recommended, going back at least two years, and countersigned by all the chief persons in the place. Those to whom the prize is adjudged must appear in person, or by an authorized proxy, at the meeting of the Academy, where a discourse upon virtue in general is delivered by one of the members, and the meritorious deeds to which the prize is awarded are described in detail.

We are not sure that it suits our English tastes to have Golden Deeds thus paid for in gold; and we are quite sure that most English folks capable of such actions would much rather hide themselves than hear their praises trumpeted forth by an Academician. Nevertheless, there is something noble in M. de Monthyon's intention; and as almost all the "virtuous actions" were done perfectly irrespective of the prize, we cannot but be grateful for having had them brought to our knowledge.

Faithful servants, peasant women devoted to charity, and heroic preservers of life, are the chief objects selected by the Academy, with here and there an instance of extraordinary exertions of filial piety; as, for instance, Jeanne Parelle, to whom a prize was given in 1835.

She was one of the eight children of a labourer at Coulange, near Montrésor, and was born in 1786. She was in service when, in 1812, her mother became paralytic, and she came home and thenceforth devoted herself to the care of her parents. A few years after, her father had a sort of fit, in which his teeth were closely locked together, but his mouth filled with blood, and he would have been choked but for Jeanne's readiness in forcing them apart with her hands, at the cost of being severely bitten. The attack came on every night, and as regularly did Jeanne expose her hands to the dreadful bites of her unconscious father, until sometimes the flesh was torn almost to the bone, and yet she cheerfully went about her work all day, endeavouring to prevent her father from perceiving her injuries. This lasted ten years, during which time the poor people only once consulted a doctor, who could do nothing for them. The poor old man grew blind, sold his little house, and at last died, leaving his wife deaf, blind, unable to move from her chair, or to do anything but tell her beads. Jeanne spun, made hay, and tended her with the utmost care and cheerfulness; but, at length, the mother and daughter accepted an invitation from an elder married sister to come to Blois. They moved accordingly; but the sister was unable to do much for them, and they were obliged to hire a room, where they were supported by Jeanne's exertions, together with an allowance from the *Bureau de Charité* of three loaves and three pounds of meat in a month.

Of Jeanne's patience and sweetness with the poor old childish woman, the following testimony was given :—One festival-day, Mère Parelle wished to go to church, and Jeanne, now a hard-working woman of forty-five, made no difficulties, but petted and caressed her, promising that she should go ; and on a hot August day she was seen with a great arm-chair on one arm, and her mother on the other. She dragged the old woman three steps, then set her down in the chair to rest ; then lifted her up, led her a little farther, and put the chair down again. They were three-quarters of an hour in going the distance Jeanne would have walked in five minutes ; and after the return was effected, Jeanne was full of delight. "Well, dearest, did you say your prayers well ? Are you glad ? You are not tired !" And this laborious journey was cheerfully renewed on the old woman's least wish. Sometimes Jeanne was advised to send her to the hospital, the last refuge of poverty in France, analogous to a workhouse.

"It breaks my heart when they say so," she said.

"But, Jeanne, your mother would be well cared for."

"I know that ; I do not say so from contempt for the hospital. She would be taken care of. But tenderness, who would give her that ?" And another time she added, "God leaves us our parents, that we may take care of them. If I forsook my poor patient, I should deserve that God should forsake me."

Jeanne and her mother lived on a ground floor, and many persons thus had the opportunity of observing that her tenderness never relaxed. She herself lived on the inferior bread provided by the charity, with a few turnips and potatoes, while she kept her mother on white bread, and, if possible, procured butter, cheese, and milk for her. Once when the curate had sent her a pie, which had been scarcely touched, her friends were surprised to see how long it lasted. "Yes, I make the most of it for my mother; I cut off nice little bits for her at her meals, it gives them a relish."

"Do not you eat it, then?"

"It would be a great pity for me to eat it, and nibble away her share, poor thing—it is her treat, and she has so few pleasures, poor sufferer!—neither hearing, nor seeing, and always in pain."

In a great frost, when it was bitterly cold, she was found trying to cover her mother with an old worn-out pelisse, and looking quite melancholy, so a good thick woollen wrapper was sent to her. On the next visit the old woman was found tied up in it, with strings over her shoulders, and the daughter beaming with delight. "Bless those who have warmed my mother," she said; "God will warm them in paradise." A pair of old warm flannel sleeves were given to her for herself, but she was seen again with bare arms in the extreme cold. "Did not the sleeves fit you?"

"Oh, I picked them to pieces. My mother had pains in her knees, so I sewed the flannel on to her under-petticoat; it is warm, you see; she likes it, poor thing." And there the pieces were, laid out neatly so as to thicken the petticoat. Amid all her infirmities the delicate neatness and fresh cleanliness of the Mère Parelle were a continual wonder. One of the visiting ladies said, "Really your mother looks quite fresh and bright"; and the good daughter smiled, looking like a young mother complimented upon her child's beauty. "You think her so?" she said. "Ah, poor thing! she is fresher than I am, for she does not drudge so much"; and then with a sigh, "Ah! if she could but hear me!" For the poor sufferer had at last grown so entirely deaf, that she did not hear her daughter at all, and was con-

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stantly calling Jeanne without knowing that she was answered. For two months in the winter the daughter had never gone to bed, and though her own health began to suffer, she never complained. For five-and-twenty years, when the prize was given in 1830, had Jeanne Parelle been the unwearied nurse and bread-winner of first two, then one parent. It seems a small thing that man should attempt to reward such exertions, yet, on the other hand, there is something touching in this hard-handed, untaught, toiling, moiling elderly charwoman being chosen out to receive honour due by the first men in intellect and position in her country, and all for the simple, homely virtues of humble life.

Madame Vigier, a bourgeoise of Aurillac, originally in easy circumstances, and at one time rich, was left a widow with four sons, and gradually fell into a state of extreme distress. Two kind gentlemen, M. Sers, the Préfet of Cantal, and M. Azémard, curate of Nôtre Dame, were interested in the family, and three of the sons were placed in good situations, but the youngest, Jean, being a particularly clever, promising boy, they wished him to receive a superior education; and finding themselves unable both to keep him at school, and support his mother, they decided on sending Madame Vigier to the hospital. Jean was at this time nine and a half years old, and at his boarding-school, scarcely knew of his mother's condition. Intending to break the matter to him, the curate invited him to his house for a holiday, and he came in his best clothes, but just as he had arrived M. Azémard was called away for a few minutes, and telling the boy not to meddle with his breviary, he went downstairs.

Little Jean was naughty boy enough to be incited to meddle by the prohibition itself! As he took up the breviary, out fell a paper. It was an order for

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the hospital, and his mother's name was on it! The first thing the boy did was to run downstairs, and back to the school, there to change his clothes for his every-day ones. When he re-appeared, the curate said, "Ah! poor child, curiosity led you astray, but the fault has brought its own punishment, and you have been hiding yourself to cry over it."

"No, Monsieur le Curé, I have not been crying. I know it all. My mother shall not go to the hospital, she would die of vexation. I will not return to school. I will stay with her. I will support her."

The curate, though struck with his manner, tried to reason him out of his resolution, and took him to several friends, who represented to him that by finishing his education, he would enable himself, by and by, to provide far better for his mother than if he broke it off at once; but his one idea was to save her from the hospital, and he was not to be persuaded. He consulted his brothers, who were making their way in the world, and begged them to assist him in maintaining her; then when they refused, he asked them at least to lend him a small sum, promising to repay them. Still they refused, and all that was left for him to do, was to sell his clothes and a watch, that the prefect had given him as a reward for some success at school. With this capital, the little fellow set up as a hawker of cakes and children's toys, and succeeded in earning enough to support his mother. At the time his name was brought forward for a "*prix de vertu*" he had been nineteen years solely devoted to her, refusing every offer that would separate him from her, and making her happy by his attentions. He was at that time porter at an inn at Aurillac, a situation which must have been a great contrast with those which he might have obtained but for the love of his mother.

It may be said, however, that to show "piety at home " is the very first and most natural of duties. Let us pass on, then, to see what devoted affection has done where the tie was only that of servant to master.

The faithful statesman of the great Henri IV., the Duc de Sully, was amply rewarded by his grateful master, and left a princely estate to his family, but after a few generations the male line became extinct, and the heiress, named Maximilienne de Bethune, after her great ancestor, carried the property into the house of Aubespine.

Bad management, together with the reverses of the Revolution, gradually destroyed the riches of this family, and at last the Marquis d'Aubespine was obliged to sell the castle of Villebon, with all the memorials of the great Sully, and the only estate that remained to him. Out of the price, he could only save enough from his creditors to purchase for himself an annuity of 6,000 francs, another of 2,400 francs for his son, and a third of 400 for Alexandre Martin, a servant who had lived with him thirty-five years, and had been educated at his expense. Soon after the poor old Marquis died, and the creditors immediately came down upon Martin, and seized his annuity. There was no redress, and Martin returned to his native village of Champrond-en-Gatinais, and took up the trade of a carpenter, which he had learnt at the Marquis's expense before becoming his servant. On the 16th of June, 1830, his cottage door opened, and there stood his old master's son, the Comte d'Aubespine, with his three little motherless children, Angelique, five years old, Josephine, four, and Louis little more than a year. The Count said that his affairs obliged him to leave France for a short time, and he had no one to whom to entrust his little ones but to good Alexandre. The charge was willingly accepted as an honour, though the carpenter knew the family secrets too well to wonder that nothing was said about paying their expenses, and perhaps he also guessed that this short absence was only to last for the Count's life.

At any rate, he accepted the children. He had three of his own, of whom the eldest was able to work. She and her mother earned twenty-four sous a day, and he earned thirty, and upon this the little count and his sisters were maintained, as far as possible, according to their rank. At their meals they were seated at the cottage-table, and waited on as respectfully by Martin, as if they had been at the grand salon in the château, and he their footman. He never sat down with them, but kept them distinct in all ways from his own children, who ate scanty brown bread with him, that the little guests might eat white ; wore their coarse clothes to rags, that the young d'Aubespines might be dressed neatly ; and slept on the floor, while the little nobles had comfortable beds. There were no murmurs ; all came naturally out of the grateful loyalty of the family towards their master's grandchildren. No more was heard of the father till his death, six years after. The news of this event excited the attention of the neighbourhood, and it became known that the last descendants of Sully were growing up in the cottage of a poor carpenter, and owing their education to the curate of the parish. Some ladies at Chartres offered to take charge of the two little girls, and though the parting was most painful, Martin was glad to enable them to be brought up as ladies. As to the boy, the first help that came for his education was from a charitable foundation, endowed by his great ancestor, at Nogent de Rotrou. and thus the only portion of the wealth of Sully that ever reached his young descendant, was that which had been laid up in the true treasure-house of charity. Afterwards a scholarship was presented to him by Louis Philippe at the College of Henri IV., and in 1838, he and Alexandre Martin were both present at a meeting of the Academy, when a discourse was made by M. Salvandi, part of which deserves to be recorded.

"Martin, your task is over. You have deserved well from all good men. You have shown our age a sight only too rare—gratitude, fidelity, respect. The Academy awards to your virtue a prize of 3,000 francs. And you, Louis d'Aubespine, since you are present at this solemnity, may it make a deep and lasting impression on your young heart. You are entering life, as persons are now and then forced to appear at a later age, with all eyes on you. Learn that the first of earthly blessings is to be honoured by one's country, and pray the God who has watched over your infancy to enable you to win that blessing that depends on ourselves, and that no event can rob us of. One day you will be told that illustrious blood flows in your veins, but never forget that you must trace your line as far back as to Sully, before you can find a name worthy to stand beside that of Martin. Grow up then to show yourself worthy of the memory of your ancestor, the devotion of your benefactor, and the patronage of the King!"

A maid-servant, called Rose Pasquer, at Nantes, during the worst years of the Revolution, entirely maintained her master and mistress after they had been ruined by the loss of their estates in St. Domingo. She was eighty years in the service of the same family, and received a prize in her hundredth year, in 1856.

Another woman, named Madeleine Blanchet, who lost her husband at the end of the first year of her marriage, was taken into the service of an old lady at Buzançais, called Madame Chambert, who put out the widow's baby to nurse, and was very kind to her. In this house, Madeleine had been for nine years, when, in the winter of 1852, there was a tremendous riot in the town, on account of the high price of bread. For some time beforehand, reports had been flying about that the Red Republicans intended to rise against all persons of property, whom they called *bourgeois*, and there was a story that an old man had said, "I have seen two Revolutions already; at the third I shall fix my scythe crosswise, and then woe to the *bourgeois*." These rumours filled the town with alarm, and certain rich persons were known to be marked out for the fury of the mob, and among them were Madame Chambert and her son. On the night before the affray, their servants received a warning that if they tried to defend their master and mistress, they would be killed; but there were at least two who disregarded the threat, a man-servant named Vourgeau and Madeleine Blanchet.

On the morning of the 14th of January was heard that sound of dread—the tocsin. The Republicans were already collected, and began by sacking a great manufactory, and then falling upon the various obnoxious establishments in the town, becoming more savage with every success. There was no resistance; the citizens shut themselves up in their houses, without attempting to unite to defend themselves, and in a short time the whole town was at the mercy of the insurgents. After many acts of plunder and cruelty had taken place, the raging populace came to M. Chambert's house, and speedily breaking in, a man named Venin led the way into the drawing-room, where M. Chambert was trying to encourage his aged mother, and the two servants were with them. Madeleine was so much terrified that she fainted away upon hearing Venin speak insolently to her master; Bourgeau went up to him and knocked him down; but as others of the furious mob came rushing in, Bourgeau's courage forsook him, and he fled. His master had fetched his gun, and shot Venin, who had risen for another attack; but this was the signal for the whole rage of the multitude to be directed against him, and he too fled, only to be followed by the savage populace, who hunted him from room to room, even to the next house, where he fell under a multitude of blows, crying out, "Mercy, friends!" "You have no friends," answered a voice from the crowd, the last sound that met the ears of the dying man.

Madeleine had, in the meantime, recovered from her swoon, recalled by the shrieks and sobs of her poor old mistress, mingled with the oaths, imprecations, and abusive threats of the murderous crowd. She saw the room thronged with these wild figures, their blouses stained with wine and blood, weapons of all sorts in their hands, triumphant fury in their faces. Her first endeavour, on regaining her senses, was to push through them to the side of the old lady, whom they had not yet personally attacked, and whose terror seemed for the moment lessened by the sight of her maid's kindly face. Then, as there was no certainty that even age and womanhood would long be a protection, Madeleine tried to remove her, and supporting her with one arm, she made her way with the other, struggling on through blows, pushes, and trampling feet, till she had rather carried than led Madame Chambert into the court; but here was the greatest danger of all. Seeing the lady escaping, the mob outside fell upon her, blows were aimed at the two defenceless women, and the mistress fell down, while the ruffians rushed at them with cries of "Death! Death!"—the same shouts with which they had hunted the son.

"Go—go, my poor girl!" faintly murmured Madame Chambert. "I must die here! Go away!"

No, indeed! Madeleine knelt over her, calling out, "You shall not kill my mistress till you have killed me!"

A man brandished a cutlass over her, and several frantic women struck her, even whilst, with outstretched arms, she parried all the strokes at her mistress, all the time appealing to their better feelings, and showing them the cowardly barbarity of thus wreaking their vengeance on a helpless old woman. Her words, and still more her self-devotion, touched two of the men, whose human hearts returned to them sufficiently to make them assist her in withstanding the ferocity of the rest. They helped her to lift up Madame Chambert, and guarded her on her way to a friend's house, where a hiding-place was found for the mistress. But the maid would not stay there; she recollected her mistress's property, and hurried back into the midst of the mob to save all she could, seizing on the plate and other valuables whenever she saw them—sometimes snatching them out of the hands of the plunderers, or pouncing on their heaps of spoil—and then, whenever she had rescued anything, depositing it in the friendly house, and then going back for another prize. She continued to go and come for several hours, until all that she had not been able to save had been entirely destroyed. All this she considered as the simplest duty, and mere fulfilment of her trust as a servant.

When order was restored, and the rioters were tried for their atrocities, she was called in as a witness, and asked what she had seen. She replied shortly and clearly, but said not a word of herself.

" But," said the President, " witnesses tell us that you covered your mistress with your own body, and saved her from the blows of the murderers. Is it true ? "

" Yes, sir," she answered, quietly.

" You were heard to declare, that they should kill you before they should kill your mistress. Is it true ? "

"Yes, sir," again she said; and that was all—not a sentence of self-exaltation, or of the false modesty of self-depreciation, passed her lips.

"If," said the President, after hearing all the evidence, "there had been only twenty men at Buzançais with the heart of that woman, none of the disasters we deplore would have taken place."

And yet Madeleine had begun by fainting; thus showing how little sensibility of nerves has to do with that true moral courage whose source is in the soul alone—as the Academician said who had the pleasant task of relating her exploits, when, at the next meeting of the Academy, she received a gold medal, and an extra prize of 5,000 francs.

Almost at the same time there came to light an act of generosity, of the most unusual description, on the part of a servant, and not even towards her own master. Fanny Muller, a young girl in one of the semi-German departments of France, was betrothed to Jean Pierre Wat, a youth in her native village, before they parted, in order to go into service, and save enough to marry upon. Fanny became a maid at a hotel at Paris, and was there much esteemed for the modesty and propriety of her conduct. In 1830, an Italian officer came to the inn—an elderly man, exiled from his country for political causes, and suffering acutely from a frightful wound received sixteen years previously, when he was serving under Napoleon I. Every day Fanny was called in to assist the surgeon in dressing the wound, and her tender heart made her a kindly nurse, until the poor soldier had exhausted all his means, and the landlord was about to turn him out in a state of utter destitution. Shocked at his condition, Fanny offered him her savings out of her wages of thirty-five francs a month, with which he took a lodging, and there tried to maintain himself by giving music-lessons. He was

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joined by his son, a young boy, but soon after fell so ill again, that he could no longer give lessons. Fanny came again to the rescue; and when her little hoard was exhausted, she borrowed. Just then her betrothed, Wat, came to Paris, with his savings of 2,000 francs, and claimed her promise. She told him all and—wonderful to relate—he was a like-minded man; he freely gave his little fortune into her hands to pay the debt, and, putting off the marriage, he further assisted her in supporting the invalid and the boy. At last, after fifteen years of this patient generosity, the poor old officer died of the effects of the amputation of the injured limb; and the clergyman of the district, knowing the circumstances, recommended the betrothed pair for the Monthyon prize, as a dowry that might at length enable them to enjoy the happiness that they had so generously deferred.

Hosts of other deeds of pure charity and beneficence among the poorest of the poor have come to light among the records of these prizes. Here is a memorial sent in 1823 by the curate of the parish of St. Jean and St. François, at Paris :—

The wife of Jacquemin, a water-carrier, living at No. 17, Rue de Quatre Fils, au Marais, father of three children, one aged five years, dumb and infirm, only earning from thirty-five to forty sous a day, came, some days ago, to ask help for a helpless, indigent woman, maimed of two fingers, and incapable of gaining a livelihood.

"Where does the woman live?" I asked.

"With us."

"How long has she been with you?"

"Ten months: this is the eleventh."

"What does she pay you by the day or month?"

"Nothing."

"What! nothing?"

"Not as much as you could put in your eye."

"Has she relief?"

"Yes; and so have I. I get bread for my children. Since she has been with us, I weaken the porridge, and she eats it with us."

"You have no means of helping others, unless she has promised to make it up to you."

"She never promised me anything but her prayers."

"Does not your husband complain?"

"My husband is a man of few words. He says nothing; he is so kind."

"Does he not go to the public-house?"

"Never; he works himself to death for his children."

"Ten months is a long time."

"She was out in the street, and begged me to shelter her for two or three days; and Jacquemin and I could never have the heart to turn her out. He says, besides, that one must do as one would be done by."

"But, my good woman, what is your lodging?"

"Two rooms."

"What is your rent?"

"It was a hundred and twenty francs; but it has been raised twenty, which makes eight sous a day."

"I think you should be asking charity for yourself."

"I have already told you, M. le Curé, that I have bread for my children. I ask for nothing for myself. Thank God, as long as my husband and I can work, I should be ashamed to beg for ourselves!"

"Well, good woman, here are ten francs for——"

"Oh, how happy poor Madame Petrel will be!"

Tears of joy came into this charitable woman's eyes. I had meant the ten francs for herself; but I did not undeceive her—the mistake was such an honour to her.

"Go and tell the widow Petrel, who owes you so much, to get two petitions drawn up; one for the Grand Almoner, the other for the Prefect, for a place in the hospital. I will present them."

And the widow was placed in the hospital, while the good Jacquemins received a prize.

There was a more heroic touch in the story of Madeleine Saunier, who was born in 1802, at St. Etienne de Varenne, in the department of the Rhone. This girl had, even when a child, sent out to watch cattle in the fields, been in the habit of sharing the meals she carried out with her with the poor, only begging them to keep the secret. The privations she imposed on herself had a serious effect on her health and growth; but still, when she grew up, her whole soul was fixed on charity; and though she had to work for her own support, she still contrived to effect marvels for others.

A poor blind widow, with an idiot daughter, lived a mile and a half from her cottage; but for fifteen years Madeleine never failed to walk to them, to feed them, set their house in order, and cheer them up to wait for her coming the next day. About as far off in another direction was a poor girl in such a horrible state of leprosy, that—shocking to relate—her own family had abandoned her, and for eighteen months she lay in an outhouse, where no one came near her but Madeleine Saunier, who came twice a day to give her the little nourishment she could take, and to dress her frightful wounds; and at last she died in the arms of this her only friend.

In 1840, Madeleine was nearly drowned in trying to cross a swelling torrent that lay between her and one of her daily pensioners, and when she was blamed for the rashness, she only said, "I could not help it; I could not go yesterday, I was obliged to go to-day."

In the course of a cold winter, Madeleine was nursing a dying woman named Mancel, who lived on the hill-side, in a hovel more like a wild beasts' den than the home of a human creature. Towards the end of a long night, Madeleine had lighted a few green sticks to endeavour to lessen the intense cold, when the miserable door, which was only closed by a stone on the floor, was pushed aside, and through the smoke, against the snow, the dark outline of a wolf was seen, ready to leap into the room. All Madeleine could do was to spring to the door, and hold it fast, pulling up everything she could to keep it shut, as the beast bounded against it, while she shouted and called in all the tones she could assume, in hopes that the wolf would fancy the garrison more numerous. Whether he were thus deceived or not, he was hungry enough to besiege her till her strength was nearly exhausted, and then took himself off at daylight.

A few hours after the sick woman died, but Madeleine could not bear to leave the poor corpse to the mercy of the wolf, and going to the nearest cottage implored permission to place it there till the burial could take place. Then again, over the snow into the wolf-haunted solitude, back she went; she took the body on her shoulders, and, bending under her burthen, she safely brought it to the cottage, where she fell on her knees, and thanked God for her safety. The next day the wolf's footsteps on the snow showed that he had spent the night in prowling round the hut, and that its frail defence had not excluded him from entering it.

France, with all its faults, has always been distinguished for the pure, disinterested honour it shows to high merit for its own sake, and Madeleine had already received a testimony of respect from good Queen Amélie, before the Monthyon prize was decreed to her.

One of the prizes was given to Étienne Lucas, a little boy of six and a half, who saw a child of two fall into the river Eure. He knew the danger, for one of

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his sisters had lately been drowned; but running to the spot, he waded about fifteen paces in the stream, caught the little one, and drew him to the bank, keeping his head carefully above water. But the bank was too steep for the little fellow to climb, and he could only stand screaming till a man came and lifted out both. A gold medal was given to him, and a scholarship at an educational establishment. Indeed, the rescuers from water, from fire, and all the accidents to which human life is liable, would be too many to attempt to record, and having described a few, we must leave our readers to seek the rest for themselves in that roll of golden deeds, the records of the *Prix de Vertu*.

THE LOSS OF THE *MAGPIE* SCHOONER

1826

Among those men who have performed the most gallant and self-devoted deeds in the most simple and natural way, we should especially reckon captains in the navy. With them it is an understood rule, that, happen what may, the commanding officer is to be the last to secure his own life—the last to leave the ship in extremity. Many and many a brave life has thus been given, but the spirit nurtured by such examples is worth infinitely more than even the continued service of the persons concerned could have been. And for themselves—this world is not all, and have we not read, that " He who will save his life shall lose it, and he who will lose his life shall save it" ?

The Newfoundland coast is a peculiarly dangerous one, from the dense fogs that hang over the water,

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caused by the warm waters of the Gulf-stream; which, rushing up from the equator, here come in contact with the cold currents from the pole, and send up such heavy vapour, that day can sometimes scarcely be discerned from night, and even at little more than arm's length objects cannot be distinguished, while from without the mist looks like a thick sheer precipice of snow.

In such a fearful fog, on the morning of the 20th of June, 1822, the small schooner, *Drake*, struck suddenly upon a rock, and almost immediately fell over on her side, the waves breaking over her. Her commander, Captain Baker, ordered her masts to be cut away, in hopes of lightening her so that she might right herself, but in vain. One boat was washed away, another upset as soon as she was launched, and there only remained the small boat called the captain's gig. The ship was fast breaking up, and the only hope was that the crew might reach a small rock, the point of which could be seen above the waves, at a distance that the fog made it difficult to calculate, but it was hoped might not be too great. A man named Lennard seized a rope, and sprang into the sea, but the current was too strong for him; he was carried away in an opposite direction, and was obliged to be dragged on board again. Then the boatswain, whose name was Turner, volunteered to make the attempt in the gig, taking a rope fastened round his body. The crew cheered him after the gallant fashion of British seamen, though they were all hanging on by ropes to the ship, with the sea breaking over them, and threatening every moment to dash the vessel to pieces. Anxiously they watched Turner in his boat, as he made his way to within a few feet of the rock. There it was lifted high and higher by a huge wave, then hurled down on the rock and shattered to pieces; but the brave boatswain was safe, and contrived to keep his hold of the rope and to scramble upon the stone.

Another great wave, almost immediately after, heaved up the remains of the ship, and dashed her down close to this rock of safety, and Captain Baker, giving up the hope of saving her, commanded the crew to leave her and make their way to it. For the first time he met with disobedience. With one voice they refused to leave the wreck unless they saw him before them in safety. Calmly he renewed his orders, saying that his life was the last and least consideration; and they were obliged to obey, leaving the ship in as orderly a manner as if they were going ashore in harbour. But they were so benumbed with cold that many were unable to climb the rock, and were swept off by the waves, among them the lieutenant. Captain Baker last of all joined his crew, and it was then discovered that they were at no great distance from the land, but that the tide was rising, and that the rock on which they stood would assuredly be covered at high water, and the heavy mist and lonely coast gave scarcely a hope that help would come ere the slowly rising waters must devour them.

Still there was no murmur, and again the gallant boatswain, who still held the rope, volunteered to make an effort to save his comrades. With a few words of earnest prayer, he secured the rope round his waist, struggled hard with the waves, and reached the shore, whence he sent back the news of his safety by a loud cheer to his comrades.

There was now a line of rope between the shore and the rock, just long enough to reach from one to the other when held by a man at each end. The only hope of safety lay in working a desperate passage along this rope to the land. The spray was already beating over those who were crouched on the rock, but not a man moved till called by name by Captain

Baker, and then it is recorded that not one, so summoned, stirred till he had used his best entreaties to the captain to take his place; but the captain had but one reply—"I will never leave the rock until every soul is safe."

Forty-four stout sailors had made their perilous way to shore. The forty-fifth looked round and saw a poor woman lying helpless, almost lifeless, on the rock, unable to move. He took her in one arm, and with the other clung to the rope. Alas! the double weight was more than the much-tried rope could bear; it broke half-way, and the poor woman and the sailor were both swallowed in the eddy. Captain Baker and three seamen remained, utterly cut off from hope or help. The men in best condition hurried off in search of help, found a farm-house, obtained a rope, and hastened back; but long ere their arrival, the waters had flowed above the head of the brave and faithful captain. All the crew could do was, with full hearts, to write a most touching letter to an officer, who had once sailed with them in the *Drake*, to entreat him to represent their captain's conduct to the Lords of the Admiralty. "In fact," said the letter, "during the whole business he proved himself a man, whose name and last conduct ought ever to be held in the highest estimation by a crew who feel it their duty to ask, from the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that which they otherwise have not the means of obtaining; that is, a public and lasting record of the lion-hearted, generous, and very unexampled way in which our late noble commander sacrificed his life, on the evening of the 23rd of June." This latter was signed by the whole surviving crew of the *Drake*, and, in consequence, a tablet in the dockyard chapel at Portsmouth commemorates the heroism of Captain Charles Baker.

No wonder that the newly-escaped crew, who had watched the grave, resolute face, and heard the calm, firm answers, felt as if such bravery were unexampled, and yet—thanks to Him who braced the hearts of our seamen—it is such fortitude as has been repeated again and again upon broken ships, and desolate rocks, and freezing icebergs, among wild winds and wilder waves.

From the cold fogs of Newfoundland, let us turn to one of the most beautiful of all the tracts of old ocean, that of the Caribbean sea, where the intense blue of the tropical sky is reflected in a sea of still deeper blue, sparkling and dimpling under the full power of the sunbeams, and broken by the wooded islands, forming the most exquisite summer scenery in the world.

But these most beautiful of seas are also the most treacherous. This is the especial home of the hurricane, and of brief furious squalls, that rise almost without warning, except from slight indications in the sky, which only an experienced eye can detect; and from the sudden sinking of the mercury in the barometer; but this often does not take place till so immediately before the storm, that there is barely a minute in which to prepare a vessel for an encounter with this most terrific of her enemies.

In these seas, in the August of 1826, the little schooner, *Magpie*, was cruising, under the command of a young lieutenant named Edward Smith, in search of a piratical vessel, which had for some time been the terror of the western shores of the island of Cuba. The 26th had been a remarkably sultry day, and towards evening the *Magpie* lay becalmed off the Colorados rocks, when, at about eight o'clock, a slight breeze sprung up from the west, and the sails were spread, but in less than an hour the wind shifted to the southward, and a small dark lurid vapour was seen under the moon. This was the well-known signal of coming peril, and instantly Mr. Smith was summoned on deck, the sails furled, and the vessel made as ready as human skill could make her for her deadly encounter. The cloud was rapidly increasing, and for a few seconds there was a perfect stillness, till upon this came a rushing, roaring sound, distant at first, but in the space of a breath, nearer and nearer; while the sea, still as a lake elsewhere, was before the black wall that moved headlong on, lashed into one white sheet of foam, flying up like flakes of snow. It was upon them! The lieutenant's voice was heard calling to cut away the masts; but even then the ship was on her side, and in a few seconds more she was gone from beneath the crew. A gunner's mate, named Meldrum, saw for one moment, by the light of a vivid flash of lightning, the faces of his comrades struggling in the water, then he swam clear of the eddy made by the sinking ship, found something floating, and grasping at it, obtained first one oar and then another. The gust, having done its work, had rushed upon its way, and the sea was as still and calm as if its late fury had been only a dream.

Meldrum listened breathlessly for some sign of his shipmates, and presently, to his great relief, heard a voice asking if any one was near. It was that of Mr. Smith, who, with six more, was clinging to a boat, which had floated up clear of the ship. So many rushed to her in their first joy, that she at once capsized, and though all the ship's company, twenty-four in number, were clinging to her, some were stretched across the keel, and she was thus of course utterly useless except as a float.

Mr. Smith ordered them all to quit their position, and allow her to be righted. They obeyed, and he then placed two in her to bale out the water with their hats, directing the others to support themselves by hanging round the gun-wales till the boat could

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be lightened enough to admit them. Just as the baling had commenced, one of the men cried out that he saw the fin of a shark, and the horror of becoming a prey to the monster made the men forget everything: they struggled to get into the boat and upset it again! Again, however, the lieutenant's firmness prevailed, the boat was righted, and he bade the men splash the water with their legs by way of frightening away the enemy. All went on well, and at length the boat was able to hold four men. Morning had come, and hope with it, when at about ten o'clock the cry "A shark! a shark!" was renewed, and at least fifteen of these creatures were among them. Once more, in the panic, the boat was overturned, but after the first moment, the calm, unflinching voice of Edward Smith recalled the men to their resolution; the boat was righted, the two men replaced, and the others still hung outside, where the sharks, at first in a playful mood, came rubbing against the men, and even passing over the boat. At last a cry of agony came from one of the men, whose leg had been seized by a shark, and blood once tasted, there was little more hope; yet still Smith kept his men steady, as, holding by the stern, he cheered the balers, and exhorted the rest to patience till the boat could safely hold them. But the monsters closed on their prey; shriek after shriek and reddening water showed when one after another was torn from the boat, and at last but six remained, when, as the lieutenant looked into the boat for a second, he ceased splashing, and at that moment one leg was bitten off. Still, in order not to startle his men, he endured the anguish without a cry or moan, and they were not aware of what had happened till the other limb was seized by the ravenous teeth, when, with a groan he could not repress, his hands quitted their hold. Two of the men were in time to grasp him and lift him into the

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boat, and there, mangled and convulsed with agony as he lay, he still turned his whole mind to the safety of his crew. Calling to him a lad named Wilson, whom, as the youngest and therefore the most sheltered from danger, he thought the most likely to survive, he desired him to tell the Admiral that he was going to Cape Ontario in search of the pirate when the disaster occurred. " Tell him," he added, " that my men have done their duty, and that no blame is attached to them. I have but one favour to ask, and that is that he will promote Meldrum to be a gunner."

He then shook each man by the hand and bade him farewell, with a cheering word for all as long as he could speak; but, as the long day of burning sun, without food or water, passed by, his strength failed, and he had lost the power of speech, when at sunset, on another alarm of the sharks, a startled movement of the men caused the boat to be again upset, and his sufferings were ended in the waves.

The only officer now left was a young mate named Maclean, who, with the spirit of his lieutenant, again persuaded the men to right the boat, which was now able to hold them all, for only four were left, himself, the gunner's mate, Meldrum, the boy Wilson, and one more. Twenty hours of struggling in the water, with, latterly, the sun broiling their heads, and not a morsel of food nor a drop of drink, had, however, nearly worn them out; the oars were lost, and though the approach of night rendered the air cooler, yet the darkness was unwelcome, as it took away all chance of being seen and picked up by some passing vessel. At about three o'clock in the morning poor young Wilson and the other man lost their senses from the sufferings they had undergone, and both jumped overboard and perished.

Maclean and Meldrum collected themselves after

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the shock, and steadily continued to bale out the water, till the boat was so nearly dry that they could lie down in her; and so spent were they, that deep sleep came to them both; nor did they wake till the sun was glaring upon them far above the horizon. What a wakening!—alone in a frail boat, their companions gone, water all round, and swarming with the cruel sharks—the sun burning overhead, and themselves now thirty-six hours without food, and parched with the deadly thirst, which they had the resolution not to attempt to slake with salt water, well knowing that the momentary relief would be followed by worse suffering, perhaps by frenzy. They durst not even speak to one another, but sat, one in the bow, one in the stern, in silent patience, waiting for death.

Hours passed away in this manner; but towards eight in the morning a white speck was seen in the distance, and both opened their parched lips to shout "A sail!—a sail!" They shook hands, with tears of joy and hope, and strained their eyes as the vessel came nearer, and the dark hull could be seen above the horizon. Nearer, nearer—scarcely half a mile from them was the vessel, when, alas! she altered her course: she was sailing away. They shouted their loudest, and waved their jackets; but in vain—they were unseen, and were being left to perish!

The gunner's mate now rose up. He was the elder and the stronger man, and he quietly announced his intention of swimming to the vessel. It was a long, fearfully long distance for a man fasting for so many hours; and more terrible still than drowning was the other danger that was hidden under the golden ripples of those blue waters. But to remain was certain death to both, and this attempt gave the one last hope. The brave man gave his last wishes in charge to his officer, made the one entreaty, that if Mr. Maclean saw a shark in pursuit he would not let him know; shook hands, and, with a brief prayer for the protection of the Almighty, sprang overboard.

Maclean was strongly tempted to swim with this last companion, but conquered the impulse as only leading to a needless peril, cheered, and waved his jacket. Once he thought he saw the fin of a shark, and made a splashing, in hopes of scaring it from the pursuit, then watched the swimmer with earnest hope. Meldrum swam, straining every nerve, splashing as he went to keep away the sharks, and shouting, but no one appeared on deck; and when he had accomplished about two-thirds of the way, his strength failed him, and he was about to resign himself to float motionless, an easy prey to the sharks, when a head was seen in the vessel. He raised his arms, jumped himself up in the water, and was seen! The brig was hove-to, a boat was put out, and he was taken into it, still able to speak and point the way to his companion.

The brig was American; and, at first, the history of the last day and night was thought so incredible that the destitute pair were taken for escaped pirates; but they were, at last, set on shore at Havannah, and thence conveyed to Port Royal by the first man-of-war that touched there.

At the court-martial held by Sir Lawrence Halstead these facts came out. Meldrum could not be prevailed on to tell his own story; but when his young officer had related it, both burst into tears and embraced before the court. Not an officer present but was deeply affected; and Meldrum was, of course, at once promoted, according to the dying request of Lieutenant Smith. He died in the year 1848, but the name of the *Magpie* schooner will ever remain connected with the memory of undaunted resolution and unwearied patience.

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THE FEVER AT OSMOTHERLY

1825

Osmotherly is a small village in Yorkshire, not far from Northallerton. It had been much neglected, the houses were ill-built, and there had been little attention to the means of cleanliness, so that the place was exceedingly unhealthy, and the people were in the state of dulness and ignorance that was sure to be the result of possessing a clergyman who, unhappily, cared neither for their souls nor bodies, and did not even reside among them, but only came over from time to time to read the service in the church.

No wonder that a deadly low fever broke out in this unfortunate place, in the autumn of 1825, and went creeping on from house to house, laying one person low after another, so that the healthy could hardly be found to nurse the sick. Among the families upon whom it fell very heavily was that of an old widow, who had seen better days, but had become nearly destitute, and had for many years past been chiefly supported by an allowance from her brother, who had settled as a merchant in America. This brother had died in the previous year, and his only child, Mary Lovell Pickard, at that time twenty-five years of age, had, after her long nursing of him, been persuaded to cross the Atlantic and make acquaintance with her English relations.

She had spent many happy months with aunts and cousins in prosperous circumstances, but she was not going to neglect the poor old aunt in the North, and taking advantage of the escort of some friends who were going to Scotland, she travelled with them as far as to Penrith, and then went by coach to Northallerton, and by post-chaise to Osmotherly, where she intended to pay a three weeks' visit at Brush Farm, and be picked up again at Penrith on their return.

Her first letter from this place, written on the 2nd of September, 1825, describes her hostess as "a small, thin old lady, with a pale complexion, and the very brightest black eyes, which sparkle when she speaks with a degree of animation almost amusing in such an old lady. She lives in a comfortable little two-storey cottage, of four rooms, which far exceeds anything I ever saw for neatness"—though it seems to have had a clay floor. "I find," added kind-hearted Mary, "that I could not have come at a better time to do good, or a worse for gaining spirits." She found the poor old lady nearly worn out with the care of two little grandsons, one of whom was dreadfully ill with whooping-cough, but could not be nursed at home, as his younger brother, a baby of a fortnight old, was equally ill with the same complaint, and his father was in great danger with the fever, and had just lost a brother in small-pox. And, worse than all, a son of the old lady had been just brought home in a melancholy state, that was almost madness.

Many would have thought only of flying from the fever. Mary Pickard only thought how she could help the sufferers. First she took charge of the sick child, who was soon very fond of her, and took a fancy to call her "Uncle Mady," and she likewise went about among the other poor, teaching them the care of their sick, and giving them every kind of nourishment they needed, aiding them with hand and head, till no wonder they were always declaring, "they never saw such a lady as Miss Pickard." What she gave away among them was never known, probably not even to herself; but it was plain that she

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must have been at the expense of their medical advice, since her aunt was totally dependent on her, and the daughter's husband had hitherto lived solely by his daily labour, while the rest of the parish was extremely poor, and the destitution caused by sickness was dreadful. She says herself that the "good little doctor" was her only helper, and no doubt she must have called him in, since in those days unions and union-doctors were not, and though parish-doctors were appointed, they were a benefit only in name to the poor, who depended almost entirely on private charity, where they were within reach of it, or else upon old women, cunning men, and herbalists. She had a hard fight with the village superstitious fancies, and a harder one with the cottagers' habits of uncleanliness; and such was the panic that prevailed, that she could hardly rouse them into exertion to remove the dirt that was probably the cause of the sickness, and certainly much increased it. Whole families seemed to have owed their food to her, while their bread-winner was laid by; but there is no record of the details of her general doings; she said in after years that she should like to write down an account of the curious things that had befallen her at Osmotherly, but she never had time to do so, and we only have her letters written to her American friends at the time, which speak of little but what concerned her relations, and for them the work she did would have seemed in itself sufficient.

Her cousin "Bessy's" husband died of the fever on the 8th of September, and Mary it was who closed his eyes, and the next day stood godmother to the poor little month-old baby, which was christened at its father's funeral, with little hope of its living, for its cough was bringing on fits. Two nights after she says: "I had been up with the little boy the greater part of the night before . . . but (in the true spirit of Polly Pickard, attempting to do more than any one would have thought reasonable,) I was quite persuaded that, as I was to sit up, it was as well to do all I could; and as poor Bessy had not had a quiet night since her child was born, and was going to sleep alone in her house for the first time since her husband's death, I thought it would do her good, and me no harm, to sit up in her parlour, and take care of the baby in the cradle, that she might have a little sleep and not feel alone. The dear little baby had been better than for some time during the day, and I doubted not that it would lie in the cradle or on my knee very quietly, except during its coughing fits. Bessy went to bed; but the poor little creature grew worse and coughed itself into a fit, in which it lay so long, that I thought it dead, and awoke its mother. But its little heart began to beat again, and it seemed to be reviving, though slowly, and I sent her off again. It appeared for some time to be recovering, but all at once it sunk away and died in my arms, so peacefully and sweetly that I could scarcely be persuaded that it had not fallen into a still slumber, or had another fit. But it was indeed gone; and when I could bring myself to give it up, I arranged its little body for its last home. I don't know when I have had my feelings more excited. It was a lovely little creature, and I have nursed it so much since I have been here, that I found it had become an object of great interest to me: not a day has passed that I have not given three or four hours to it, and it was always so quiet with me, that it seemed almost to know when I took it." As to her own danger in the midst of infection: "Don't fear for me; I don't think I am going to be sick, and it will be for some good purpose if I am."

She took up her quarters with the poor bereaved mother, and was able to be a great comfort to her, by long talks at night, when all was still, showing her the way to the only true comfort, of which the poor, ill-taught young woman had hitherto known little. At the week's end, however, poor Bessy sickened of the worst form of typhus; and the next day the favourite little Jamie fell ill also. The villagers thought the house doomed, and Mary saw not a creature but the doctor, day after day. The illness lasted eleven days, during which Mary never left her, night or day, except to run back to the grandmother's for a change of clothes; for the sufferer did not like to be touched by any other person, and it was best that as few should be exposed to the infection as possible. "Her senses never forsook her for a moment, nor her deep sense of gratitude to God for the mercies which He had bestowed on her amid all her sufferings. It seemed to her that His immediate Providence had sent me to them just at this time; and her expressions of affection and thankfulness were indeed most delightful to me." She died on the 30th of September; and Mary returned to the care of the little Jamie, who was still extremely ill. The elder boy was seven years old, and able to understand the desolateness of his home, and, as he sat by the fire, kept on repeating at intervals the entreaty, "Cousin Mary, you will let me live with you, won't you?" Poor little fellow! he did not long need an earthly home; he, too, fell ill, and after a most patiently-borne sickness, watched constantly by this loving friend, died on the 30th of October.

Still Mary's nursing was not ended. On the 2nd of November she wrote: "There are very many cases of the fever in the village, and as I am almost the only person in it who is not afraid of infection, I still have full employment in assisting the poor sufferers. My cousin's little niece is still very ill. I have indeed been wonderfully preserved and strengthened. Heaven save me from presumption, but I cannot help feeling that I could not have lived through all that I have, unless God had protected me!"

By the end of the month, however, the fever had abated sufficiently for Mary to comply with the earnest entreaties of her friends, and come to them at Penrith; but it was a cruel parting with poor little Jamie, who had grown so fond of her that his screams of agony at her departure long echoed in her ears. The welcome and quiet she enjoyed among her friends made the stay with them "like the rest of the Sabbath to the weary labourer," though she was very weak and weary, and needed much rest and care. But before December was at an end, came a letter from the doctor, telling her the poor old aunt herself was at the point of death, with the same malignant fever. Vainly did Mary's friends assure her that the danger of returning into the infected air was far greater than even all she had gone through before, in her present weakened state. She knew it was her duty to go, and took her leave of them "with many solemn thoughts, though hid by cheerful looks," and feeling as if it was for ever that she parted with them.

After an eight hours' solitary journey, she arrived, and had the pleasure of the most ecstatic greeting from poor little Jamie. "He ran round me, jumped up in my lap, stroked and kissed my face, as if he could not trust to the evidence of one sense, and at last burst out a-crying, 'Uncle Mady won't go away again!—Uncle Mady live with Jamie every day now, wont you, Uncle Mady?'"

Again she had to be sole nurse and servant in the sick house, "acting in a fourfold capacity," as she called it. She put up a little bed in a corner of her aunt's room, and devoted herself to her. It was less lonely than before, for the doctor had brought his sister to keep house for him, and Mary was able to

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see much of her. Moreover, the old aunt began to recover from the time of her arrival; and her American heart was rejoiced by the snow—" it looked so homeish and so much like your happy home the last time I saw it, that I have been enjoying the sight highly."

But the cold and wet, at last, broke down her strength. One night, when alone, such a dreadful cramp seized her, that she fell on the floor, and for a considerable time could neither move nor make any one hear. For many days after, she lay on her bed, in a state of extreme weakness, from which she could hardly be recovered, but with unfailing brightness. It was always remarked, that " her worst days were her gayest ones "; and at length she recovered, and left the place where she had been for so many months truly a ministering angel. She returned to that home in America which had, during her toils, seemed to her " like the dreams one has of heaven, in the twilight hours, between sleeping and waking." There she became a happy wife and mother, and continued to send remittances to the old aunt, as long as they were needed; but she lost sight of little Jamie, and had no further intercourse with him. He, however, did not forget her, and, early in 1849, sent a long, affectionate letter to her, dwelling gratefully on all she had done for his dying parents and himself. But alas! the letter came too late. Mary—now the widowed Mrs. Ware—had long been sinking under a fatal malady, so endured, that " her sick chamber was always the happiest room in the house," and had died on a lovely April day, in which she looked up and said, with a smile, " What a beautiful day to go *home!* "

Surely, if it be a glorious deed to save life at the risk of our own, Mary Lovell Pickard, standing alone among the dead and dying, in her cheerful resolution and strong trust, deserves honour as much as any hero who braved death in battle or in wreck.

Miss Pickard's noble action, and another similar one, suggested a beautiful sketch by Miss Martineau, entitled "The Sickness and Health of the People of Bleaburn," in Nos. 9, 10, 11, 12 of *Household Words*.

Let us add to this a parallel from Saint Remi Bosrecourt, near Dieppe, where, in 1824, there was a terrible attack of typhus, extremely infectious. It broke out in a house where there were eleven persons; and such were its ravages, that, at last, only the father remained with four little children, all ill; and such was the general alarm, that no one would go near the cottage. All the nurses whom the authorities of the village endeavoured to employ, replied that they would not run after death. At last, a lady, Mademoiselle Celestine Détrimont, offered herself; and when the fearful risk was set before her, she answered, "In the service of God and the poor there is no fear of death." To the cottage then she went. One more child died, and she herself prepared it for burial, placing the coffin in the court-yard, where alone any one dared to come. The other three and the father were saved by her care; and this is said to have been only one instance in a whole life of self-devotion and charity.

DISCIPLINE

Perhaps there have never been occasions, when the habit of instantaneous obedience to the voice of duty has produced more touching instances of forbearance and unselfishness, than in the confusion and despair of a shipwreck. What a wreck can be without such qualities, has been but too well proved by the horrible scenes that took place after the loss of the French ship *Meduse*, when brutal selfishness was followed by savage violence and cannibalism too shocking to be dwelt upon ; though memorable as an example that " every man for himself " is the most fatal of all policies, even were self-preservation the primary object.

In British ships of war, unshrinking obedience, heeding nothing but the one matter in hand, is the rule. "As a landsman," says Colonel Fisher, an engineer-officer, who was on board the *Plover* gun-boat in the hottest fire on the Peiho river, "I was much struck with the coolness with which the navigation of the vessel was attended to ; the man in the chains cries the soundings, the master gives his orders to the man at the helm and the engineers below ; the helmsman has no eyes or ears but for the master's directions and signals. . . . All seem intent on what is their duty at the time being, and utterly unmindful of the struggle raging round them." And this when not only were they being shot down every moment, but when each comparatively harmless ball rocked the gun-boat, sent splinters flying, or brought the yards down upon their heads. Where such conduct is regarded as a mere matter of course, from the grey-headed admiral down to the cadet and the cabin-boy, no wonder that multitudes of deeds have been done, glorious because they placed duty far above self, and proved that Nelson's signal is indeed true to the strongest instinct of the British sailor.

The only difficulty is to choose among the instances of patient obedience on record ; and how many more are there, unknown to all but to Him who treasures up the record, until the day when " the sea shall give up her dead ! " Let us cast a glance at the *Atalante*, bewildered in a fog upon the coast of Nova Scotia,

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and deceived by the signal-guns of another ship in distress, till she struck upon the formidable reefs, known by the name of the Sisters Rocks, off Sambro Island. The wreck was complete and hopeless, and a number of men scrambled at once into the pinnace; but the captain, seeing that she could never float so loaded, ordered twenty of them out, and was implicitly obeyed, so entirely without a murmur, that as the men hung clinging to the weather-gunwale of the ship, they drowned the crashing of the falling masts with their cheers.

As soon as the pinnace was lightened, she floated off, but immediately turned bottom upwards. Still the crew never lost their self-possession for one moment, but succeeded in righting her, and resuming their places, without the loss of a man. They then waited beyond the dash of the breakers on the reef, for Captain Hickey and their companions, who were still clinging to the remains of the ship. There were two other boats, but too small to hold the whole number, and an attempt was made to construct a raft, but the beating of the waves rendered this impossible, so the men already in the pinnace were directed to lie down in the bottom, and pack themselves like herrings in a barrel, while the lesser boats returned through the surf to pick off the rest—a most difficult matter, and indeed some had to be dragged off on ropes, and others to swim, but not one was lost. The captain was of course the last man to quit the wreck, though several of the officers were most unwilling to precede him even for a moment, and by the time he reached the boat, the last timbers had almost entirely disappeared, amid the loud cheers of the brave-hearted crew.

Nothing was saved but the admiral's despatches, which the captain had secured at the first moment, and the chronometer. This last was the special

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charge of the captain's clerk, who had been directed always to hold it in his hand when the guns were fired, or the ship underwent any shock, so as to prevent the works from being injured. On the first alarm he had caught up the chronometer and run on deck, but being unable to swim, was forced to cling to the mizen-mast. When the ship fell over, and the mast became nearly horizontal, he crawled out to the mizen-top, and sat there till the spar gave way and plunged him into the waves, whence he was dragged into one of the boats, half-drowned, but grasping tight his precious trust. A poor merry negro, who held fast to his fiddle to the last moment, as he clung to the main-chains, was obliged to let his instrument go, amid the laughter and fun of his messmates, who seem to have found food for merriment in every occurrence. No one had a full suit of clothes but an old quarter-master, named Samuel Shanks, who had comported himself throughout as composedly as if shipwrecks befell him every day, and did not even take off his hat, except for a last cheer to the *Atalante* as she sunk. He recollected that he had a small compass seal hanging to his watch, and this being handed to the captain, in his gig, and placed on the top of the chronometer, it proved steady enough to steer by, as the three boats crept carefully along in the dense fog. They landed, after a few hours, on the coast, about twenty miles from Halifax, at a fishing station, where they were warmed and fed.

Thence the captain took the most exhausted and least clothed of the party in the boats to Halifax, leaving the others to march through the half-cleared country. Before night the whole ship's company assembled, without one man missing, in as complete order as if nothing had happened.

Here perfect discipline had proved the means of safety, and hope had never failed for a moment; but we have still fresh in our memories an occasion where such forbearing obedience led to a willing self-sacrifice, when safety might have been possible to the strong at the expense of certain destruction to the weak.

The *Birkenhead*, a war steamer used as a transport, was on her way to Algoa Bay with about 630 persons on board, 132 being her own crew, the rest being detachments from the 12th, 74th, and 91st regiments, and the wives and children of the soldiers. In the dead of the night between the 25th and 28th of February 1852, the vessel struck on a reef of sunken rocks on the African coast, and from the rapidity with which she was moving, and the violence of the waves became rapidly a hopeless wreck. On the shock, the whole of the men and officers hurried on deck, and the commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Seton, calling the other officers about him, impressed on them the necessity of preserving order and silence among the men, and placed them at the disposal of the commander of the vessel.

Sixty were placed at the pumps, others to disengage the boats, and others to throw the poor horses overboard, so as to lighten the ship, while the rest were sent to the poop to ease the fore part of the ship. Every one did as directed, and not a murmur nor cry was heard. They were as steady as if on parade, as ready as though embarking in a British harbour.

The largest boat was unhappily too much encumbered to be got at quickly enough, but the cutter was filled with the women and children, and pushed off, as did two other small boats. The other two large ones were, one capsized, the other stove in by the fall of the funnel, which took place immediately after the cutter was clear of the ship, only twelve or fifteen minutes after the ship had struck. At the same time the whole vessel broke in two parts, crosswise, and the stern part began to sink and fill with water. The commander called out, "All those that can swim jump overboard and swim for the boats."

But Colonel Seton and the officers with him besought their men to forbear, showing them that if they did so, the boats with the women must be swamped. And they stood still. Not more than three made the attempt. Officers and men alike awaited to face almost certain death rather than endanger the women and children. Young soldiers, mostly but a short time in the service, were as patiently resolute as their elders. In a few moments the whole of these brave men were washed into the sea, some sinking, some swimming, some clinging to spars. The boats picked up as many as was possible without overloading them, and then made for the shore, which was only two miles off, hoping to land these and return for more, but the surf ran so high that landing was impossible, and after seeking till daylight for a safe landing-place, they were at last picked up by a schooner, which then made for the wreck, where thirty or forty were still hanging to the masts in a dreadful state of exhaustion.

A few, both of men and horses, had succeeded in swimming to the shore, but some were devoured by the sharks on the way, and out of the whole number in the ship, only 192 were saved. But those who were lost, both sailors and soldiers, have left behind them a memory of calm, self-denying courage as heroic as ever was shown on battle-field.

THE RESCUERS

We have had a glimpse of the horrors on board a wrecked ship, and the resolution with which they can be endured and conquered. Let us now look at the shore, and at the spirit that has prompted even women to become rescuers.

Here, then, is a portion of a "Night Scene by the Sea," namely the dangerous coast near Cromer, in the county of Norfolk. It is taken from a poem by Joanna Baillie, and is literally and exactly true. There, amid

"The roar of winds and waves
As strong contention loudly raves,
A fearful sound of fearful commotion
The many angry voices of the ocean,"

the foremost in affording aid to the shipwrecked seamen was a crippled lady,

"One with limbs nerve-bound,
Whose feet have never touched the ground,
Who loves in tomes of Runic lore
To scan the curious tales of yore,
Of gods and heroes dimly wild,
And hath intently oft beguiled
Her passing hours with mystic rhymes,
Legends by bards rehearsed of other times;
Learned, and loving learning well,
For college hall or cloistered cell
A student meet, yet all the while
As meet, with repartee or smile,
'Mid easy converse, polished, blithe, and boon,
To join the circles of a gay saloon;
From childhood reared in wealth and ease,
The daily care herself to please—
For selfish nature here below
A dangerous state, I trow."

That crippled lady was Anna Gurney, one of a gifted family, surpassing them perhaps in mental powers and attainments, certainly not inferior to any in Christian benevolence, and (which is the strangest thing of all), absolutely more than a match for the soundest and healthiest among them in personal activity, though unable through her whole life to stand or move without mechanical aid. Her intellect was of the highest order. After learning all the more accessible languages, she betook herself to the ancient Teutonic branches, and in 1819 translated the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. As invalid and as scholar, she would, as the verses above quoted observe, have seemed in especial danger of dwelling on nothing beyond her own constant and severe sufferings, and the studies that beguiled her attention from them.

Yet she was full of the warmest, brightest sympathy. Her conversation was not only delightful from her brilliant powers, but from her ready perception of the wants and wishes of others. Not only was her wheeled chair propelled in a moment to her bookshelves when she wanted a volume to illustrate her thought, but the moment she caught a friend's eye in search of any article at a little distance, her chair was turned in that direction, and the object was presented with infinite grace. She made young people exceedingly fond of her, and delighted to assist them in their studies. She would help boys to prepare their Greek and Latin tasks with infinite zest, and would enliven a lesson with comical and original allusions. Other children of a lower rank were also taught by her, and from her home at North Repps Cottage she won, by her kindness and helpfulness, the strongest influence over the fisherfolk upon the coast, who looked upon her as a superior being.

At her own expense she procured a lifeboat and apparatus for rescuing the shipwrecked, and to secure the right use of these, she would be wheeled down to the shore in her chair to give orders and superintend their execution. Surely there can be no more noble picture than this infirm woman, constantly in pain, whose right it would have seemed to be shielded from a rough blast or the very knowledge of suffering, coming forth in the dead of night, amid the howling storm, beating spray, and drenching rain, to direct and inspirit the rugged, seafaring men, and send them on errands of life or death. Which was most marvellous, it is hard to say, the force of will that actuated her, or the force of understanding that gave value to such presence and commands.

Truly may Miss Baillie say—

"But no, my words her words may not express,
Their generous import your own heart must guess."

And when half-drowned sailors were brought ashore she remained to give care and directions for their treatment, or took them to her own home, where they were so welcomed that it was a saying on the coast that it was worth while to be wrecked to be received by Miss Gurney.

"The lady returns to her home again,
With the sound of blessings in her ear,
From young and old, her heart to cheer;
Sweet thoughts within her secret soul to cherish,
The blessings of those who were ready to perish;
And there lays her down on her peaceful pillow,
Bless'd by the Lord of the wind and the billow."

When at the age of sixty-one, she laid her down on her last pillow, she was carried to her rest, in the seaside church of Overstrand, by old fishermen—rugged, loving men who knew and valued her—and when they had lowered the coffin down the stone steps of the open vault, they formed a knot at the foot and wept bitterly. More than a thousand persons from the coast had gathered to show their respect and gratitude; most were in mourning, many in tears. "I never," said one who was present, "saw so many men weeping; at one time it seemed a general wail." The service was read by the clergyman of the parish (who could not but feel that he had lost his most precious earthly helper) simply and calmly; with cheerful brightness, which showed that his faith had realized her gain, he gave thanks for her.

The cripple gave what she had—her vigorous mind, her means, and her spirit. Let us turn to one who had neither silver nor gold, nothing but her resolute heart and brave skilful hands. Grace Darling, the daughter of the keeper of one of the lighthouses upon the Fern Islands, a perilous cluster of rocks off St. Abb's head, was wakened towards the morning of the 6th of September, 1838, by shrieks of distress; and when dawn came, perceived the remains of a wreck upon Longstone Island, the outermost of the group.

Grace awoke her father and urged him to launch his boat and go to the rescue of any one who might still be alive in the stranded vessel; but the tide was rising, wind and sea were wild, and the old man hung back. Grace, however, was sure that she discerned a movement on the wreck, as though living beings were still there, and, seizing an oar, placed herself in the boat, which she was well able to manage. Her father could not let her go alone, and they rowed off together in a tremendous sea, encouraged by perceiving that nine persons were still clinging to the forepart of the ship. The father, after many vain attempts, succeeded in landing on the rock, and making his way to the wreck, while Grace rowed off and on among the breakers, dexterously guiding her little boat, which but for her excellent management would have been dashed to pieces against the rocks.

One by one, with the utmost care and skill, the nine survivors were placed in the boat and carried to the lighthouse, where Grace lodged, fed, and nursed them for two whole days before the storm abated enough for communication with the mainland. One of them was a Mrs. Dawson, whose two children, of eleven and eight years old, had actually been buffeted to death by the waves while she held them in her arms, and who was so much injured herself that it was long before she could leave her bed.

The vessel was the *Forfarshire*, a large steamer plying between Hull and Dundee. Her boilers had been out of order, their leakage had rendered the engines useless, and when the storm arose, the ship was unmanageable without her steam, and was driven helplessly upon the Fern Islands. The only boat had been lowered by eight of the sailors, who were pushing off in her when one gentleman rushed on deck, seized a rope, and swung himself in after them. These nine were picked up by a sloop and saved. Of the others the whole number had either been drowned in their berths or washed off the wreck, except four of the crew and five passengers, whom Grace Darling's valour had rescued. The entire number of the lost was not known, but more than forty had certainly gone on board at Hull. Some sailors at Sunderland went out to the wreck during the storm at the peril of their lives, but found only corpses to bring away. Grace's noble conduct rang throughout England, and every testimonial that could be offered was sent to her. We believe that this brave girl soon after died of decline.

THE RESCUE PARTY

1853

The Arctic seas have been the scene of some of the most noted instances of daring and patience shown by mariners. Ever since the reign of Edward VI., when the brave Sir Hugh Willoughby and his crew all perished frozen at their posts among the rocks of Spitzbergen, the relentless ice, and soft though fatal snows of those dreary realms, have formed the grave of many a gallant sailor. Many a life has been lost in the attempt to discover the North-west Passage, between Davis's and Behring's Straits, and to trace the outline of the northern coast of America. Whether those lives were wasted, or whether their brave example was not worth more to the world than a few years more of continuance, is not the question here to be asked. The later Arctic voyagers had a nobler purpose than that of completing the survey of the barren coast, namely, the search for Sir John Franklin, who, in 1845, had gone forth with two tried vessels, the *Erebus* and *Terror*, on his second polar expedition, and had been seen and heard of no more.

Voyage after voyage was undertaken, in the hope at first of relieving and rescuing the lost ships' companies, and then of ascertaining their fate, until the Admiralty decided that to send forth more exploring parties was a vain risking of valuable lives, and it was only the earnest perseverance of Sir John Franklin's wife and the chivalrous adventure of individuals that carried on the search, until, at the end of fourteen years, Captain, afterwards Sir Leopold M'Clintock, in the *Fox* yacht, discovered the last records, which placed it beyond all doubt that the gentle and courageous Franklin had died peacefully, before evil days had come on his party, and that the rest had more gradually perished under cold and hunger, in the fearful prison of icebergs.

Gallant and resolute as were all these northern travellers, there are two names that perhaps deserve above the others to be recorded, because their free offer of themselves was not prompted by the common tie of country. One was the French Lieutenant Bellot, who sailed in the *Albert* in 1851, and after most manful exertions, which gained the respect and love of all who sailed with him, was drowned by the breaking of the ice in Wellington Sound. The other was Dr. Elisha Kane, an American naval surgeon, who in 1853 volunteered to command an American expedition in search of the lost vessels, which some supposed to be shut up by the ice in a basin of clearer, warmer water, such as it was thought might exist round the North Pole, and the way to which might be opened or closed, according to the shifting of the icebergs.

His vessel was the brig *Advance*, and his course was directed through Davis's Straits; and on the way past the Danish settlements in Greenland they provided themselves with a partially educated young Esquimaux as a hunter, and with a team of dogs, which were to be used in drawing sledges over the ice in explorations.

The whole expedition was one Golden Deed, but there is not space to describe it in all its details: we must confine ourselves to the most striking episode in their adventures, hoping that it may send our readers to the book itself. The ship was brought to a standstill in Renfaelner Bay, on the west side of Smith's Strait, between the 79th and 80th degrees of latitude. It was only the 10th of September when the ice closed in so as to render further progress of the ship impossible. On the 7th of November the sun was seen for the last time, and darkness set in for 141 days—such darkness at times as was misery even to the dogs, who used to contend with one another for the power of lying within sight of the crack of light under the cabin door.

Before the light failed, however, Dr. Kane had sent out parties to make caches, or stores of provisions, at various intervals. These were to be used by the exploring companies whom he proposed to send out in sledges, while the ice was still unbroken, in hopes of thus discovering the way to the Polynia, or polar basin, in which he thought Franklin might be shut up.

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The same work was resumed with the first gleams of returning light in early spring, and on the 18th of March a sledge was despatched with eight men to arrange one of these dépôts for future use. Towards midnight on the 29th, Dr. Kane and those who had remained in the ship, were sewing moccasins in their warm cabin by lamplight, when steps were heard above, and down came three of the absent ones, staggering, swollen, haggard, and scarcely able to speak. Four of their companions were lying under their tent frozen and disabled; "somewhere among the hummocks, to the north and east, it was drifting heavily." A brave Irishman, Thomas Hickey, had remained at the peril of his life to feed them, and these three had set out to try to obtain aid, but they were so utterly exhausted and bewildered, that they could hardly be restored sufficiently to explain themselves.

Instantly to set out to the rescue, was of course Dr. Kane's first thought, and as soon as the facts had been ascertained, a sledge, a small tent, and some pemmican, or pounded and spiced meat, were packed up; Mr. Ohlsen, who was the least disabled of the sufferers, was put into a fur bag, with his legs rolled up in dog skins and eiderdown, and strapped upon the sledge, in the hope that he would serve as a guide, and nine men, with Dr. Kane, set forth across the ice in cold seventy-eight degrees below the freezing-point.

Mr. Ohlsen, who had not slept for fifty hours, dropped asleep as soon as the sledge began to move, and thus he continued for sixteen hours, during which the ten proceeded with some knowledge of their course, since huge icebergs of noted forms, stretching in "long beaded lines" across the bay, served as a sort of guide-posts. But just when they had come beyond their knowledge, except that their missing comrades must be somewhere within forty miles round, he awoke, evidently delirious and perfectly useless. Presently, they came to a long, level floe, or field of ice, and Dr. Kane thinking it might have been attractive to weary men unable to stagger over the wild hummocks and rugged surface of the other parts, he decided to search it thoroughly. He left the sledge, raised the tent. buried the pemmican, and took poor Ohlsen out of his bag, as he was just able to keep his legs, and the thermometer had sunk three degrees lower, so that to halt would have been certain death. The thirst was dreadful, for there was no waiting to melt the snow, and in such a temperature, if it be not thawed before touching the mouth, it burns like caustic, and leaves the lips and tongue bleeding. The men were ordered to spread themselves so as to search completely ; but though they readily obeyed, they could not help continually closing up together, either, Dr. Kane thought, from getting bewildered by the forms of the ice, or from the invincible awe and dread of solitude, acting on their shattered nerves in that vast field of intense lonely whiteness, and in the atmosphere of deadly cold. The two strongest were seized with shortness of breath and trembling fits, and Dr. Kane himself fainted twice on the snow. Thus they had spent two hours, having been nearly eighteen without water or food, when Hans, their Esquimaux hunter, thought he saw a sledge-track in the snow, and though there was still a doubt whether it were not a mere rift made by the wind, they followed it for another hour, till at length they beheld the stars and stripes of the American flag fluttering on a hummock of snow, and close behind it was the tent of the lost.

Dr. Kane was among the last to come up ; his men were all standing in file beside the tent, waiting in a sort of awe for him to be the first to enter it and see whether their messmates still lived. He crawled into

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the darkness, and heard a burst of welcome from four poor helpless figures lying stretched on their backs. "We expected you! We were sure you would come!" and then burst out a hearty cheer outside, and for the first time Dr. Kane was well-nigh overcome by strong feeling.

Here were fifteen souls in all to be brought back to the ship. The new-comers had travelled without rest for twenty-one hours, and the tent would barely hold eight men; while outside, motion was the only means of sustaining life. By turns, then, the rescue party took two hours of sleep each, while those who remained awake paced the snow outside, and food having been taken, the homeward journey began, but not till all the sick had been undressed, rubbed, and newly packed in double buffalo skins, in which—having had each limb swathed in reindeer skins—they were laid on their own sledge and sewn up in one huge bale, with an opening over each mouth for breathing. This took four hours, and gave almost all the rescuers frost-bitten fingers, and then, all hands standing round, a prayer was said, and the ten set out to drag the four in their sledge over ice and snow, now in ridges, now in hummocks, up and down, hard and wild beyond conception. Ohlsen was sufficiently restored to walk, and all went cheerfully for about six hours, when every one became sensible of a sudden failure of their powers.

"Bonsall and Morton, two of our stoutest men, came to me, begging permission to sleep; they were not cold, the wind did not enter them now, a little sleep was all that they wanted." Presently Hans was found nearly stiff under a drift, and Thomas, bolt upright, had his eyes closed, and could hardly articulate. At last John Blake threw himself on the snow, and refused to rise. They did not complain of feeling cold; but it was in vain that I wrestled, boxed, ran, argued, jeered, or reprimanded: an immediate halt could not be avoided." So the tent was pitched again with much difficulty, for their hands were too powerless to strike a light, and even the whisky, which had been put under all the coverings of the sledge at the men's feet, was frozen. Into the tent all the sick and failing were put, and James M'Gary was left in charge of them, with orders to come on after a halt of four hours, while Dr. Kane and William Godfrey pushed on ahead, meaning to reach the tent that had been left halfway, and thaw some food by the time the rest came up.

Happily, they were on a level tract of ice, for they could hardly have contended with difficulties in the nine miles they had still to go to this tent. They were neither of them in their right senses, but had resolution enough to keep moving, and imposing on one another a continued utterance of words; but they lost all count of time, and could only remember having seen a bear walking leisurely along, and tearing up a fur garment that had been dropped the day before. The beast rolled it into a ball, but took no notice of them, and they proceeded steadily, so "drunken with cold" that they hardly had power to care for the sight of their half-way tent undergoing the same fate. However, their approach frightened away the bear, after it had done no worse than overthrowing the tent. The exhausted pair raised it with much difficulty, crawled in, and slept for three hours. When they awoke, Dr. Kane's beard was frozen so fast to the buffalo-skin over him that Godfrey had to cut him out with his jack-knife; but they had recovered their faculties, and had time to make a fire, thaw some ice, and make some soup with the pemmican, before the rest of the party arrived.

After having given them this refreshment, the last stage of the journey began, and the most severe; for the ice was wild and rough, and exhaustion was leading to the most grievous of losses—that of self-control. In their thirst, some could no longer abstain from eating snow—their mouths swelled, and they became speechless; and all were overpowered by the deadly sleep of cold, dropping torpid upon the snow. But Dr. Kane found that, when roused by force at the end of three minutes, these snatches of sleep did them good, and each in turn was allowed to sit on the runners of the sledge, watched, and awakened. The day was without wind and sunshiny, otherwise they must have perished; for the whole became so nearly delirious that they retained no recollection of their proceedings; they only traced their course afterwards by their footmarks. But when perception and memory were lost, obedience and self-devotion lived on—still these hungry, frost-bitten, senseless men tugged at the sledge that bore their comrades—still held together, and obeyed their leader, who afterwards continued the soundest of the party. One was sent staggering forward, and was proved by the marks in the snow to have repeatedly fallen; but he reached the brig safely, and was capable of repeating with perfect accuracy the messages Dr. Kane had charged him with for the surgeon.

A dog-team, with a sledge and some restoratives, was at once sent out to meet the others, with the surgeon, Dr. Hayes, who was shocked at the condition in which he encountered them—four lying, sewn up in furs, on the sledge, which the other ten were drawing. These ten, three days since, hardy, vigorous men, were covered with frost, feeble, and bent. They gave not a glance of recognition, but only a mere vacant, wild stare, and still staggered on, every one of them delirious. It was one o'clock in the afternoon of the third day that they arrived, after sixty-six hours' exposure, during which they had been almost constantly on foot. Most of those who still kept their footing stumbled straight on, as if they saw and heard nothing, till they came to the ship's side, where, on Dr. Kane giving the word to halt, they dropped the lines, mounted the ship's side, and each made straight for his own bed, where he rolled in, just as he was, in all his icy furs, and fell into a heavy sleep.

There were only the seven who had been left with the ship (five of them being invalids) to carry up the four helpless ones and attend to all the rest. Dr. Kane, indeed, retained his faculties, assisted in carrying them in, and saw them attended to; after which he lay down in his cot, but, after an hour or two, he shouted, "Halloo, on deck there!" and when Dr. Hayes came to him, he gave orders "to call all hands to lay aft, and take two reefs in the stove-pipe!" In like manner, each of the party, as he awoke, began to rave, and for two days the ship was an absolute madhouse, the greater part of its inmates frantic in their several cots. Dr. Kane was the first to recover—Ohlsen the last, his mind constantly running upon the search for his comrades in the tent, which he thought himself the only person able to discover. Of those whom the party had gone to assist, good "Irish Tom" soon recovered; but two died in the course of a few days, and the rest suffered very severely.

The rest of Dr. Kane's adventures cannot here be told; suffice it to say that his ship remained immovable and, after a second winter of terrible suffering from the diseases induced by the want of fresh meat and vegetables—the place of which was ill-supplied by rats, puppies, and scurvy-grass—it was decided to take to the boats; and, between these and sledges, the ship's company of the *Advance*, at last, found their way to Greenland, after so long a seclusion from all European news that, when first they heard of the Crimean War, they thought an alliance between England and France a mere hallucination of their ignorant informant. Dr. Kane—always an unhealthy man—did not live long after his return; but he survived long enough to put on record one of the most striking and beautiful histories of patience and unselfishness that form part of the best treasury this world has to show.

THE CHILDREN IN THE WOOD OF THE FAR SOUTH

1864

OUR roll of Golden Deeds is nearly at an end, not indeed that acts of self-devotion are exhausted, but that full and authentic particulars have not reached us of more than we have related. We have not ventured to tell the stories of the gentlemen who, in the Indian Mutiny, rode for miles through an enemy's country, under a burning sun, with the young children of a friend in their arms. One of these little creatures, still under three years old, whose protector had had to fight his way through the natives with her on his horse's neck, was too young to know what she owed to him, and only remembered the horrors of her ride, so that when he was at length able to restore her to her mother, she shrank from him, and would not even look at him. The other little girl, a little Miss Christian, not four years old, was only rescued for the time, to fall with her protector into the possession of a native prince, who retained them in his power while besieging Lucknow. The child pined and died before the time of release came, but her illness was the occasion of an unlooked-for comfort to her companions in captivity. A native doctor, who was allowed to prescribe for her, sent some powders for her wrapped in a chance bit of printed paper. It proved to be the leaf of a torn Bible, and these were the words that it bore: "I, even I, am He that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man that shall be made as grass; and forgettest the LORD thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor—and where is the fury of the oppressor? The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail. But I am the LORD thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: the LORD of Hosts is His Name." (Isa. xlvi. 12–15.)

The few survivors of that band of "captive exiles" have declared that these words were to them a message of exceeding joy and hope of deliverance from the fury of the oppressor, and that they were thus greatly strengthened to endure unto the end. Neither the child nor her rescuer were among them. They had both been set free by sickness from captivity and all other ills of this mortal life.

Neither can we here pause upon the story of Arthur Cheek, the young ensign of only sixteen years old,. who at Allahabad, sorely wounded and dying of thirst, not only was steadfast in confessing his own faith, but by his exclamation, "Oh, my friend, come what may, do not deny the LORD JESUS," prevented the apostasy of a convert from Mahometanism, whom the Sepoys were cruelly torturing. A sudden attack of the Madras fusileers saved the convert, but it was

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too late to save the martyr boy, who had sunk to rest ere his countrymen had made their way into the city.

We must turn from these, and speak of those little elder sisters, almost mothers in their love and devotion. We see such little heroines oftener than we think dragging about babies as big as themselves, to whom they often give the last morsel when they are hungry enough themselves, or rushing almost under horses' hoofs, or carriage-wheels, to snatch some unlucky brother from the destruction into which he is just big enough to toddle. Perhaps the most notable of all these sisters was Françoise Marie, of Rochebeaucour, who, at eleven years old, was left an orphan with a little brother of four, to whom she fully did a mother's part for three years, maintaining him entirely by her knitting and spinning, until, in a severe winter, a wolf with five whelps burst into the cottage, attracted by the smell of the hot loaves that Françoise had been baking.

She had almost driven the she-wolf off with a heavy stick, when seeing one of the cubs about to attack her brother, she seized the boy, thrust him into a cupboard, and buttoned the door. That moment gave the wolf time to fly on her throat, and the next moment she was the prey of the wild beasts. Her brother remained safe, though unable to get out of the cupboard till released by the neighbours. He was an old man in 1796, still cherishing the memory of the mother-like sister who had died to save him.

Nor may we forget the little Scottish sister, who, when lost with her little brother on the mountain side, was saved by the good collie dog, who sped home to call help, and guided the father to the spot where, buried far under a snow-drift, lay the two children, the younger wrapped in all the warmer garments of the elder. Both survived, thanks to the good dog's timely sagacity. Indeed, we believe that a chapter of canine deeds, almost deserving the name of golden, might be brought together in honour of our faithful comrades. There was Delta, the dog whose skeleton was disinterred at Herculaneum, stretched over that of a boy of twelve years old, with an inscription on his collar, telling that he had three times saved the life of his master—from the sea, from robbers, and from wolves; there was Phileros, the dog of Athens, who broke his leg by leaping after his young master when he had fallen out at the window, and finally died of grief on his grave; there was the dog who is commemorated in Vandyke's picture of the Duke of Richmond, whom his sagacity and courage had saved from assassins; there was the dog who awoke his master, Lord Forbes, at Castle Forbes, in Ireland, and dragged him, half suffocated and helpless, from his burning bedroom; there was the well-known dog who daily carried bannocks to the shepherd's child lost in the cave behind the waterfall; there was the Newfoundland dog who won a silver collar by saving, first the postman, and then his letter-bag from the water of a swelled ford. Gellert must be given up, since his story proves to be only a Western version of an Indian legend of a serpent and mungoose, instead of a wolf and a hound, but there is no passing by the dog of Montargis, who, under Charles VI. of France, vainly defended his master, Aubri de Montdidier, when set upon by his mortal foe, Macaire; then lay day and night on the forest grave where Macaire hoped his crime was hidden, only going to the house of his master's chief friend in Paris, for his daily meal, until at length he was followed, the ground searched, the murder discovered, and the corpse freshly buried. Afterwards, the dog's furious attacks upon Macaire were deemed an accusation, and the matter was put to the proof by the ordeal of combat in the Isle de Notre Dame. The dog had a tub into which he might retire, the man a club and a shield. The combat was so lengthy that Macaire, no doubt from the force of conscience, was so worn out that he fainted away, and on coming to himself owned the deed. Dogs of St. Bernard and Newfoundland dogs rise before us by scores when we think of these gallant doings—among them the strange black dog who came to the lone widow's house the night she had with her all the proceeds of the sale of her effects, fought manfully till he drove off the thieves who assailed the house, and disappeared so mysteriously next morning, that she always regarded him as a special messenger of Providence for her protection. The touching picture of "Rab and his friends" is no unique incident; it is only that in Dr. John Brown it met with a spectator and biographer able to appreciate and regard the beautiful affection and fidelity that our Maker has embodied before our eyes in these His good creatures. If, as some wise men have deemed, the brutes are created to show us in living shape, figures and emblems of our own qualities, the dog, with his master taking to him the place of our Great Master, is most certainly the living type of that heart-whole devotion which is the root of Golden Deeds.

But we must pass on to the latest of which we have heard, and then turn aside from the roll that has truly been a labour of love and refreshment.

It was in Australia—that great southern island, or rather continent, that has altered the convenient old geographical arrangement of four quarters of the world, and, willingly or unwillingly, has received a large proportion of the English population, before whom the poor feeble native race is fast dwindling away.

Under English management, Australia is excellent for sheep farms; but the "bush," as colonists everywhere call uncleared forest land, is particularly desolate and dreary. And it was into such bush that, in the winter of 1864, the three little children of a carpenter, named Duff, at a station near Melbourne, were often sent out to gather broom. The eldest was a boy of nine years old ; Jane, his sister, was seven, and little Frank was five. One evening they did not come back, and their parents became alarmed. There are, indeed, in Australia no dangerous wild beasts, such as the bears that two little lost Canadian babes once called to as their father's oxen, " Buck " and " Bell " ; but, on the other hand, there are no raspberries, such as sustained those little wanderers—not even the " blackberries " that " dyed the pretty lips " of our own " Babes in the Wood "—only dull gum-trees, with oddly-shaped cones and blue upright leaves, and bark that they shed instead of changing leaves—she-oak trees, with hard joints, like overgrown English horse-tails—monstrous nettle-trees, like a bad dream of our English stinging-nettle—all growing in such similar shapes and clusters, that it is a most difficult, nay, impossible, thing for a person once lost to recover his bearings ; and, worse than all, the drought is terrible, so that thirst will cause a more painful death than even hunger. Stout men, sturdy explorers, have been known to lie down, famished, to die in this inhospitable forest ; and what could be the fate of the poor little children ?

The father and his neighbours in vain shouted " Cooee ! " (the bush call), and sought the country day after day, until a week had passed ; when he obtained the aid of some of the natives, who, despised as they are by the colonists, have a wonderful power of tracking the faintest trail in their forests. They soon made out signs where the children had been, from the bendings of the twigs or the tramplings of the grass. " Here little one tired," they said ; " sit down. Big one kneel down ; carry him along. Here travel all night; dark—not see that bush; her fall on him." Then came: "Here little one tired again; big one kneel down; no get up—fall flat on face."

The children had been lost on Friday afternoon. On the Saturday week, the blacks led the father up to a clump of broom, where lay three little figures, the least in the middle, with his sister's frock over his own clothes. Duff went up to them, comforted, at least, that he could carry home the little corpses to their mother. But the eldest boy roused himself, sat up, and said, "Father!" then fell back from sheer weakness; and, indeed, his lips were so shrunk, that they could no longer cover his teeth. Little Frank awoke as if from a quiet sleep. "Father, why didn't you come before?" he said; "we were cooeeing for you." Jane was scarcely alive; when she was lifted up, she only made a murmur of "Cold—cold!" If neither had lived to tell the tale, little Frank's condition, so much better than that of his elders, would have told how free from selfishness their behaviour must have been through all that dreadful week. When the elder brother was carried past the places that the blacks had pointed out, his account of their wanderings and adventures exactly agreed with what the natives had inferred. He said that this whole time they had been without food, and had only had one drink of water—perhaps from the "pitcher plant," which is a native of those woods, and has a wonderfully-shaped cup which retains water for many weeks. A man had been known to live eleven days in the bush upon nothing but water; but the endurance of these little ones was even more wonderful.

They all recovered; and the feeling of admiration for little Jane was so strong in the colony that a subscription was raised for her, which soon amounted to several hundred pounds.